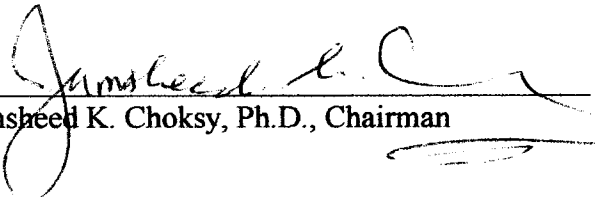


SEARCHING FOR THE ISLAMIC EPISTEME:
THE STATUS OF HISTORICAL INFORMATION
IN MEDIEVAL MIDDLE-EASTERN ANTHOLOGICAL WRITING

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Jamsheed K. Choksy, Ph.D., Chairman

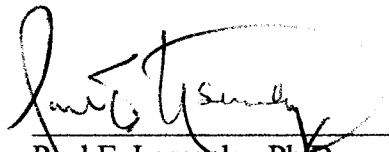


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SEARCHING FOR THE ISLAMIC EPISTEME:
THE STATUS OF HISTORICAL INFORMATION
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This is a study of two compilations that originated in western Iran before the Mongol conquest. The research contributes to the ongoing discussion of the organization and preservation of knowledge in literate societies. The *Muḥāḍarāt al-udabā' wa-muḥāwarāt al-shu'arā' wa-l-bulaghā'* (Conversations among Men of Letters and Debates between Men of Poetry and Rhetoric) is a major anthology of literary Arabic, ascribed to the lexicographer and philosopher Abū al-Qāsim al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī (d. before 1050?). The *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr wa-āyat al-surūr* (Comfort of Hearts and Wonder of Delights) is a Persian miscellany about the Great Seljuq sultanate that Muḥammad al-Rāwandī (d. after 1209), an obscure calligrapher and theologian, compiled in the first decade of the thirteenth century in Hamadan to petition the Rum Seljuq sultan Kay Khusrau (ruled 1192–1197 and 1205–1211) in Konya. Both works are single-subject encyclopedias, designed as comprehensive textbooks.

The circulation of manuscripts and imprints provides a diachronic perspective on the diffusion of knowledge. These textbooks circulated largely between Isfahan and Istanbul. Rāghib's anthology is a propaedeutic work for a general audience, and is still in print in contemporary Middle Eastern societies. In contrast, Rāwandī's miscellany is a personalized curriculum of Great Seljuq politics and courtly etiquette, and thus became obsolete in the sixteenth century. The biographical data on their authors offer the complementary synchronic perspective on the geography of knowledge in pre-Mongol Iran.

The contents of the *Muḥāḍarāt* and the *Rāḥat* illustrate how their authors utilized well-established conventions of transmitting knowledge to compile an anthology of literary Arabic and a miscellany about the Great Seljuq sultanate. The arrangement of their contents is the most original aspect of these textbooks. On the macro-level, the sequence of parts, chapters, and sections follows a principle of associative order of topics and disciplines. The textbooks are witnesses to societal dependence on literacy. The oral transmission of knowledge had lost its monopoly, yet writing was less a replacement than a supplement to the oral tradition. The contents and structure of the *Muḥāḍarāt* and the *Rāḥat* document the continued prestige and use of oral practices within a literate society.

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But the final outcome of every research project depends also on the always undeserved, and thus even more precious, gifts of serendipity. Ulrich Marzolph probably does not remember that he recommended Rāḡib's *Muḥāḍarāt* as an interesting and manageable *adab* anthology. Sheila Lindenbaum introduced me to Anglo-American research on medieval Latin anthologies. On my committee, Dr. Losensky suggested Rāwandī's *Rāḡat* as a counter example to the *Muḥāḍarāt*, while Dr. Choksy reminded me of the riches that are to be found in the field of Iranian studies. Without the course on Islamic manuscripts conducted by David Pingree and Adam Gacek, it is very unlikely that I would have ever laid hands on an original Islamic manuscript. Discussions with Dale F. Eickelman directed my attention to the educational uses of compilations. Ann G. Carmichael encouraged me to think about the relationship between the philosophy of history and the history of science.

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The dissertation is dedicated to my parents Magret and Albrecht Riedel, who simply wanted me to get a good education.

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Transliteration and Translation

The transliteration of Persian words is Arabic-based and follows the system of the *Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft*: ḏj or j is ğ, kh is ħ, sh is š, gh is ğ, and k is q; in addition, a long *wāw* is always transliterated as a the long vowel *ū*, and a long *yā'* as *ī*. The four Persian letters that supplement the Arabic alphabet are transliterated as p, č, ž, and g. To represent the Persian conventions of using the Arabic script as clearly as possible, the final *hā'* in Arabic and Persian words, such as *ḥuṭbe* and *ḥāne*, is transliterated as -e, while the final *hā'* in Persian words, such as *dih* and *rāh*, is represented as -h. Moreover, the *Rāḥat*'s critical edition preserved the peculiarity of the thirteenth-century manuscript to use ḏ in vowel/consonant-combinations instead of the standardized d (*Rāwandī, Rāḥat*: XXXVIII s.v. 5). This historical spelling convention is not represented in the transliteration to facilitate reading and understanding of the Persian citations.

Ottoman names are given in their Republican Turkish spelling to distinguish the Ottoman reception of Arabic and Persian textbooks.

In titles and quotes, different systems of transliteration are preserved and not adjusted.

The English spelling of well-known foreign names and terms—for example, Koran, Meshed, vizier, or Shi'ite—follows the *American Heritage Dictionary*, 4th ed.

The English rendition of Koran verses follows the translation by A.J. Arberry (London: Allen & Unwin, 1955). Otherwise the translations are mine, though references to translations by others are given in the notes whenever necessary.

Notation of Historical Dates

All dates are given according to the Common Era only. If the conversion of a date of the Islamic lunar calendar falls between two years of the Common Era—for example, the *hiġra* year 502 began on 11 August 1108 CE and ended on 31 July 1109 CE—the Common Era year that corresponds to the longer part of the respective lunar year will be used in the text. For all conversions, I used the Islamic calendar, available on the homepage of the Institute of Oriental Studies at Zurich University: <http://www.ori.unizh/hegira.html>.

Abbreviations

i. Calendars

BCE	Before the Common Era
CE	Common Era, coinciding with the Christian era
<i>hiġra</i>	The Islamic lunar calendar begins 622 CE, which is the <i>hiġra</i> year 1, when the prophet Muḥammad left Mecca to emigrate with his followers to Yathrib, which today is known as Medina

ii. Catalogues

GAL	<i>Geschichte der Arabischen Litteratur</i> by Carl Brockelmann
GAS	<i>Geschichte des Arabischen Schrifttums</i> by Fuat Sezgin
OCLC	<i>Online Computer Library Center, Inc.</i> , the records of its WorldCat are available on the internet: http://www.firstsearch.oclc.org
Storey	<i>Persian Literature: A Bio-bibliographical Survey</i> by C.A. Storey
Storey-Bregel	<i>Peridskaya literatura: Bio-bibliograficheskii obzor</i> by C.A. Storey, revised by Yu. E. Bregel

iii. Dictionaries

Hava	<i>Al-Farā'id al-durrīya: Arabic-English Dictionary</i> by J.G. Hava (5th ed.)
Lane	<i>Arabic-English Lexicon</i> by E.W. Lane
Mu'in	<i>Farhang-i farsī-i mutawassit</i> by Muḥammad Mu'in
Wehr & Cowan	<i>A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic</i> by Hans Wehr, revised by J. Milton Cowan (4th ed.)

I **Introduction: Textbooks of medieval Islamic societies**

But science students accept theories on the authority of teacher and text, not because of evidence. What alternatives have they, or what competence?

Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*

Aber das, was an jeder Geschichte immer auch neu ist, läßt sich kausal gerade nicht erklären. Jede Kausalerklärung geht davon aus, daß man ein Phänomen aus einem anderen, sogar aus anderartigen Phänomenen ableitet. Damit wird ein Zusammenhang gestiftet, der in dem zu erklärenden Phänomen gerade nicht erhalten sein muß. Kausale Ableitungen können also, will man die Einmaligkeit eines geschichtlichen Ereignisses erfassen, nur subsidiär verwendet werden.

Reinhart Koselleck, "Terror und Traum"

Compilations of non-fictional texts written for educational purposes are an intellectual phenomenon specific to literate societies. Recent research on medieval and premodern encyclopedias, discussed at three west-European conferences during the 1990s, has largely concentrated on composite sources from Antiquity, the Latin Middle Ages, and the Enlightenment.¹ But the upsurge of interest in how large quantities of data were organized in premodern comprehensive texts, which ought to contain all that should be known about the world or one of its phenomena, parallels the growing prestige of information science and information technology as academic disciplines at universities in the western world. The epistemological consequences of the ongoing transition from print to digital media cannot yet be gauged, and the fierce competition between various

1. The proceedings were published: Picone, *L'Enciclopedia*; Eybl, *Enzyklopädien*; and Binkley, *Pre-Modern Encyclopaedic Texts*. For contributions to Arabic literature, see the article coauthored by Claude Bremond and Bernard Darbord in Picone, *L'Enciclopedia*; and the articles by Hilary Kilpatrick, Maaike van Berkel, Geert Jan van Gelder, and Ulrich Marzolph in Binkley, *Pre-Modern Encyclopaedic Texts*. I am greatly indebted to Sheila Lindenbaum for bringing Peter Binkley's work to my attention. Binkley supplemented the published proceedings with a "Working Bibliography" that is available on the internet. Tony Street was so kind as to pass on information about the encyclopedia research at the Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities, Cambridge, UK; see: Featherstone and Turner, "Idea of an Encyclopaedia." In Germany, research on compilations of non-fictional texts in Latin and the west-European vernaculars has been promoted by the Sonderforschungsbereich *Träger, Formen, Felder pragmatischer Schriftlichkeit* at the Institut für Frühmittelalterforschung at the Universität Münster.

internet search engines illustrates the difficulties of capturing the entropy of classification systems on the internet. Accordingly, the impact of digitalization on definitions and storage of knowledge is also not yet fully comprehended. Although there are, in theory, no limits to knowledge, every human life is finite, and concepts of knowledge change over time and vary between societies as well as civilizations.

My study of two compilations that originated in western Iran before the Mongol conquest of the thirteenth century, and which circulated for centuries between Tehran and Istanbul, contributes to the debate on the organization and preservation of knowledge in literate societies. The *Muḥāḍarāt al-udabā' wa-muḥāwarāt al-šū'arā' wa-l-bulaġā'* (Conversations among Men of Letters and Debates between Men of Poetry and Rhetoric) is a major anthology of literary Arabic, ascribed to the lexicographer and philosopher Abū al-Qāsim al-Rāġib (died before 1050?) and associated with Isfahan. The *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr wa-āyat al-surūr* (Comfort of Hearts and Wonder of Delights) is a miscellany of Persian texts about the Great Seljuq sultanate that Naġm al-Dīn Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. °Alī b. Sulaimān al-Rāwandī (died after 1209), an obscure calligrapher and theologian, compiled in the first decade of the thirteenth century in Hamadan to petition the Rum Seljuq sultan Ġiyāṭ al-Dīn Kai Ḥusrau b. Qiliġ Arslān (ruled 1192–1197 and 1205–1211) in Konya.

Between the seventh and thirteenth centuries, Islamic civilization gave rise to astounding intellectual and scientific achievements. The central role of knowledge (°ilm) and its pursuit (*ṭalab al-°ilm*) is considered both a hallmark of and an explanation for the legendary splendors of the courts in medieval Baghdad, Cairo, Granada, or Ghazna.² The

2. Franz Rosenthal is representative of this attitude in his *Knowledge Triumphant*: “in Islam, the concept of knowledge enjoyed an importance unparalleled in other civilizations.” (334).

thirteenth century, however, marks a watershed in the course of Middle-Eastern history. In retrospect, the political and socioeconomic turmoil of the Mongol conquest appears as the final blow to the Golden Age of so-called classical Islamic civilization. The impression of intellectual decline is reinforced by the significant developments that occurred in Christian Europe, especially regarding the spread of Scholasticism in the Latin West. Consequently, there is scant research on the intellectual history of Islamic societies after the Mongol conquest: the rise of western Europe since the sixteenth century and its unparalleled global dominance since the eighteenth century largely made the study of non-western concepts of knowledge seem theoretically and practically insignificant.³ For the explanatory value of the Golden-Age concept lies in confirming the contemporary supremacy of western civilization, inasmuch as fall and decline were already hovering in the wings of the Mongol conquest while modern science emerged in western Europe.⁴ The concept presupposes a *translatio imperii* suggesting two interpretations of the intellectual history of medieval Islamic societies: a prologue to the

3. Lévi-Strauss, *Structural Anthropology*: “A society can live, act, and be transformed, and still avoid becoming intoxicated with the conviction that all the societies that preceded it during tens of millenniums did nothing more than prepare the ground for *its* advent, that all its contemporaries—even those at the antipodes—are diligently striving to overtake it, and that the societies which will succeed it until the end of time ought to be mainly concerned with following its path. This attitude is as naïve as maintaining that the earth occupies the center of the universe and that man is the summit of creation.” (336).

4. Rosaldo, “From the Door of His Tent”: “In a similar vein, the historian dwells more on what the villagers of Montaillou lack (usually relative to lowland villages or centers of feudal hierarchy) than on what they possess. This peculiar descriptive rhetoric, depicting through empty negatives than positive features, appears frequently in ethnographic discourse, as will be seen in the work of Evans-Pritchard. The following passages indicate how Le Roy Ladurie characterizes his subjects, not by defining their form of life, but by highlighting absences, the technology and forms of social stratification they have failed to develop” (85).

Renaissance and Humanism,⁵ or the allegory of a prodigal son who wasted his splendid Hellenistic inheritance.⁶ But the gold standard for research on Islamic civilization is in either case the development of western Europe since the eleventh century.⁷ The starting point of my study, in contrast, is the consideration that it is necessary to understand the intellectual history of Islamic societies, as far as possible, in its own terms before it will be possible to explain, for example, the stark contrast between Baghdad during the reign of the Abbasid caliph Hārūn al-Rašīd (ruled 786–809) and Baghdad under the presidency of Saddam Hussein (ruled 1979–2003). The *Muḥāḍarāt* and the *Rāḥat* are compilations of non-fictional texts designed for the educational purpose of instructing their readers, and are thus evidence for communal concepts of knowledge. My analysis of these two textbooks, the circulation of which was not terminated by the Mongol conquest, explores how their histories of reception reflect the political and socioeconomic changes that occurred in Middle-Eastern societies between the eleventh and twentieth centuries.

Research on eleventh- and twelfth-century Iran is severely restricted by the paucity of evidence that survived the watershed of the Mongol conquest. Since the

5. Graeco-Arabic studies focus on the reception of the intellectual heritage of Antiquity and Hellenism until the eleventh century; see, for example: Gutas, *Greek Thought*. Otherwise, Adam Mez, Mohammed Arkoun, Joel L. Kraemer, and others have tried to enhance the status of medieval Islamic civilization by identifying an indigenous Islamic Renaissance or Humanism; see, for example: Makdisi, *Rise of Humanism*.

6. See, for example: Grant, *Foundations of Modern Science*; and Huff, *Rise of Early Modern Science*.

7. Saliba, "Seeking the Origins": "the works of one cultural science are always evaluated in terms of the criteria of modern science. As a result, the history of science is studied for the sake of discovering the cumulative connecting links that led to the creation of modern science and not as an attempt to understand one more feature of the originating culture in order to understand it in its totality." (141).

disciplinary divisions in Middle-Eastern studies are largely based on languages,⁸ Arabic and Persian literatures that originated within the same geographical region and in temporal proximity are usually not treated together, although the population of western Iran was not only ethnically and religiously but also linguistically diverse. The analysis of the *Muḥāḍarāt* and the *Rāḥat* offers the opportunity to examine how this diversity was reflected in composite sources that are comparable despite their obvious differences in contents, target audiences, and histories of reception.⁹ Rāḡib and Rāwandī composed these works as freelancers without a patron while living in west-Iranian cities. The compilations are written in literary Arabic and literary Persian, respectively. The juxtaposition of their contents elucidates concepts of knowledge in western Iran before the Mongol conquest, whereas the comparison of their reception documents which of the collected data were transformed into indispensable components of canonical knowledge.

I. a. Manuscripts and imprints

The *Muḥāḍarāt* and the *Rāḥat* are both composite texts because their contents were culled from sundry preexisting sources. The development of the Arabic script in the second half

8. For the observation that the classification of texts based on languages is approached differently in the history of science, see: Saliba, "Seeking the Origins": "No one would dispute the classification of a scientific text written in Chinese or Greek as belonging to the Chinese or Greek cultural spheres respectively. But when it comes to other scientific works, say texts written in Arabic, Persian, Turkish or Urdu, for example, the problem becomes slightly more complicated and those same historians of science drop linguistic classificatory terminology to resort instead to a cultural/religious terminology that designates such works as Islamic." (140).

9. For comparison strategies, especially individualizing and variation-finding comparison, see: Tilly, *Big Structures*: 80–87. For such a comparison, the limitation to two compilations is sensible. The description of sixty-four Chinese encyclopedias, for example, did not allow for the induction of the ideal type of such a *leishu*; see: Kaderas, *Leishu*: 257–259.

of the seventh century led to the emergence of Arabic literature and the written documentation of knowledge about all aspects of society: reports about the life of the Prophet and his companions, the heritage of pre-Islamic poetry, legal decisions on the collection of taxes and the distribution of revenues, or the heritage of Hellenistic medicine and philosophy. With the rise of written Persian literature in the tenth and eleventh centuries, the written transmission of knowledge gained a second medium, extending its grasp to fields of knowledge outside the Arabic-Islamic civilization.¹⁰ Arabic and Persian compilations thereafter formed the foundation of intellectual pursuits in Islamic societies, and a rich differentiation followed from their continued popularity. Today, a large variety of medieval and premodern compilations are available as modern imprints in the Middle East. But Arabic and Persian compilations are not yet well researched. To twentieth-century scholars, their contents appeared as purely derivative with their authors having fed on the originality of others, filling page after page with thoughts, stories, or verses that were not their own.¹¹ This situation has led to an inconsistent approach to compilations in Middle-Eastern studies. Scholars routinely relied on composite sources as almost inexhaustible databases of functional data¹² about

10. "Mawsū'a": 907; compare: "Muḥtārāt": 529.

11. See, for example, the lack of enthusiasm expressed by John North in Binkley, *Pre-modern Encyclopaedic Texts*: "for I can hardly believe that there is any philosopher around today with a natural inclination—as opposed to a grant-generated, or a congress-generated inclination—to investigate the epistemology of the encyclopedia." (183).

12. For the heuristic distinction between functional and intentional data, see: Schmale, *Funktion und Formen*: "[es] genügt für unsere Zwecke... einerseits zwischen dem funktionalen Bereich des menschlichen Handelns und dessen Wirkungen und andererseits dem intentionalen Bereich der Vorstellungen der handelnden und die Handlungen betrachtenden Personen zu unterscheiden. ... das Interesse der modernen Geschichtswissenschaft [hat sich] seit dem 19. Jahrhundert dennoch in erster Linie auf den funktionalen Bereich, auf das vornehmlich politisch Handelnde, auf die sogenannten historischen Tatsachen, die

medieval Islamic societies: biographical dictionaries, book catalogs, chronicles, or handbooks of legal and medical knowledge. But the study of Arabic and Persian compilations as vehicles of the transmission of knowledge has lacked intellectual appeal, although these composite sources constitute an extremely rich body of evidence for the intellectual history of medieval and premodern Islamic societies.¹³

A study of the *Muḥāḍarāt* and the *Rāḥat* faces the practical challenge that, after more than two centuries of Arabic and Persian studies at universities in western Europe, we have still a remarkably insufficient knowledge of extant and accessible Islamic manuscripts in collections in the Middle East and Asia, as well as an uneven cataloguing of Islamic manuscripts in private and public depositories in the western world.¹⁴ Even though it is not possible to estimate the ratio of lost to preserved manuscripts, it is ironic that this inadequate cataloguing reflects in part the enormous numbers of manuscripts that were manufactured in Middle-Eastern societies between the eighth and the twentieth

‘Ereignisse’ gerichtet.” (1).

13. Ž. Vesel in “Mawsū‘a”: “But regarding the question of the originality of this literature in relation to the Arabic models by which it was largely inspired, this work of evaluation still remains to be done for the majority of the texts.”(908); and J.T.P. de Bruijn in “Muḥtārāt”: “Persian anthologies have so far not been studied as a special category of books. Yet the role which they played in the workings of literature was quite substantial. ... Anthologies also deserve our attention in their own right because they provide valuable insights into the production of books.” (529). Similar attitudes to Latin anthologies have been observed by Rouse and Rouse, *Authentic Witnesses*: “While the *Florilegium Angelicum* and the *Florilegium Gallicum* have been studied with regard to the individual texts contained in them, few have treated *florilegia* as real books, written by someone who drew upon other books, and asked whether one can determine where they were compiled on the basis of the medieval circulation of the texts that they contain.” (155).

14. Déroche, *Manuel*: 25.

centuries.¹⁵ A thorough analysis of the reasons for our curiously incomplete grasp of the actually preserved evidence for Middle-Eastern history is beyond the scope of my study,¹⁶ but this situation is noteworthy because it is so bewildering to scholars who work in fields, such as classics or medieval French history, and who are used to taking for granted that they know reasonably well both the sources that are lost and the copies of the sources that have survived.¹⁷

This state of research on Islamic manuscripts has had dire consequences for the state of research on Islamic codicology, Arabic paleography, source criticism, and scholarly editing, since progress in these fields would depend on enhancing our current knowledge of preserved Islamic manuscripts.¹⁸ The *Muḥāḍarāt* and the *Rāḥat* are available in twentieth-century imprints, though only the *Rāḥat* has been critically edited

15. For strategies as to how to address the puzzling shortage of original documents among the preserved and accessible written sources for medieval Islamic societies, with the exception of the Ottoman empire, see: Chamberlain, *Knowledge*: 11–21. For the claim that official documents were probably literally inserted into Persian historiography because their authors were employed at noble courts and hence were privy to such information, see: Meisami, *Persian Historiography*: 290–291. For a remarkably sanguine summary of the archives and documents of Middle-Eastern history, compare: Humphreys, *Islamic History*: 40–49.

16. The issue is not mentioned in the discussion of the written sources—documents and historiography—of Middle-Eastern history by Humphreys, *Islamic History*: 25–49.

17. Research on Latin anthologies, especially the studies by Mary A. Rouse and Richard H. Rouse, highlights the substantial gaps in our knowledge of Arabic and Persian compilations through illustrating which approaches are currently not feasible due to our incomplete knowledge of the actually preserved Islamic manuscripts; see, for example: Rouse and Rouse, *Authentic Witnesses*: 124 (identification of the sources of a compilation to determine the extent of their editing and revision); 155 and 159 (circulation of a compilation juxtaposed to that of its sources); and 102 (citation of a compilation in other works).

18. For a consideration of how to edit compilations that originated in the Latin West, and which were continually revised and adjusted to new audiences, see: Meier, “Grundzüge”: 469 and 482. That criteria of scholarly editing are subject to change and vary from discipline to discipline is discussed in the essays collected in Greetham, *Scholarly Editing*.

according to the standards of early-twentieth-century Persian philology.¹⁹ Whenever possible I consider manuscripts and imprints next to each other. I examined a selection of *Muḥāḍarāt* manuscripts and the unique *Rāḥat* manuscript in west-European libraries, and manuscript catalogues have yielded indirect evidence for extant copies and their circulation. Although I compare the data yielded by manuscripts and imprints to examine the limits of that which can be learned about these compilations from the histories of their reception, for all other Arabic, Persian, and Ottoman sources I have consulted the imprints that were readily accessible. This was a pragmatic, though inconsistent, decision because all of those imprints are subject to the same reservations as the imprints of the *Muḥāḍarāt* and the *Rāḥat*. Nonetheless, references to the compilations and their authors in other works supplied invaluable additional evidence that allowed me to double-check conclusions based on the codicological evidence of the manuscripts and the internal evidence of the compilations to situate Rāḡib and Rāwandī within the geography of knowledge²⁰ in pre-Mongol Iran.

I. b. Middle-Eastern anthologies

According to the current research on Arabic and Persian anthologies, both the *Muḥāḍarāt* and the *Rāḥat* can be described as anthologies, though specialists of Arabic and Persian literatures approach compilations in general and anthologies in particular from very different viewpoints. Research on Arabic anthologies is dominated by two interrelated

19. Rāḡib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ed. Beirut; and Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*. For an evaluation of the imprints, see below, chapter II, notes 63-66 (*Muḥāḍarāt*) and 199-200 (*Rāḥat*).

20. The phrase *geography of knowledge* is used by Burke, *Social History*: 55.

questions. The first concerns the problem of literary genre: Which criteria determine whether a composite source is an anthology or an encyclopedia? The second addresses their epistemological context: Which composite sources represent Arabic letters (*adab*), and which also qualify as belles-lettres, understood as entertaining, and occasionally fictional, literature?²¹ Unfortunately, there is no research on the emergence and development of the various genres of secular and sacred literature, surveying the interaction between texts and society in diachronic and synchronic perspectives.²² Nor is there a debate about the methodology and theory indispensable for the task of writing this history.²³

21. For *adab* as synonym of education (*παιδεία*), see: Rosenthal, *Knowledge Triumphant*: 200 and 284. For *adab* as synonym of *Humanism*, see: Makdisi, *Rise of Humanism*: 110. For *adab* as a literary genre, see: “Mawsū‘a”: 903. For *adab* as the term for general knowledge that can be distinguished from *‘ilm* as the term for specialized learning, often closely associated with religious knowledge and theology, see: Jan Geert van Gelder in Binkley, *Pre-modern Encyclopaedic Texts*: 244–245. For closely associating *adab* with rhetoric, see: Meisami, *Persian Historiography*: 289–294; for the assumption that *adab* was the solution to the intricate problems of working out the chronology and the functional data in historiography, compare: Robinson, *Historiography*: 76. Because of the use of the term *adab* in twentieth-century Arabic, medieval works of *adab* are still approached as the direct precursor of entertaining literature, fiction, or belles-lettres; see, for example: Allen, *Arabic Literary Heritage*: 220–222. Translating *adab* as “Arabic letters” captures, in contrast, the range of this medieval Islamic concept because the term *letters* encompasses prose as well as poetry, and cannot be restricted to rhetoric or fiction.

22. Jauss, *Alterität und Modernität*: “Die Geschichtlichkeit der Literatur geht indes nicht in der Abfolge ästhetisch-formaler Systeme und dem Wandel der Gattungshierarchien auf. Es genügt nicht, die <literarische Reihe> nur zur Sprache als der nächstliegenden <außerliterarischen Reihe> in Beziehung zu setzen. Da literarische Gattungen ihren <Sitz im Leben> und damit gesellschaftliche Funktion haben, muß auch die literarische Evolution über das ihr eigene Verhältnis von Diachronie und Synchronie hinaus durch ihre gesellschaftliche Funktion im allgemeinen Prozeß der Geschichte bestimmbar sein.” (356). The current historiography of medieval and premodern Arabic and Persian literatures is still dominated by the monumental bio-bibliographical surveys of preserved texts that originated between the seventh and nineteenth centuries; the most important are GAL, GAS, Storey, and Storey-Bregel.

23. Koselleck, *Vergangene Zukunft*: “Streng genommen kann uns eine Quelle nie sagen, was wir sagen sollen. Wohl aber hindert sie uns, Aussagen zu machen, die wir nicht machen dürfen. Die Quellen haben ein Vetorecht. ... Das, was eine Geschichte zur Geschichte macht, ist nie allein aus den Quellen ableitbar: es bedarf einer Theorie möglicher Geschichte, um Quellen überhaupt erst zum Sprechen zu bringen.” (206); “So führte die konsequente Aufklärung zu dem Postulat, daß die Geschichte in ihrer Komplexität nur erkannt werden könne, wenn sich der Historiker von einer Theorie leiten lasse. Er mußte, ..., die Geschichte aus einem Aggregat in ein System überführen, um Quellen ordnen, befragen und zum Sprechen

In the late 1960s, Franz Rosenthal equated *adab* with belles-lettres and entertainment, and classified monographs—defined as single-subject compilations—and anthologies as entertaining literature, but encyclopedias and mirrors-for-princes as educational literature.²⁴ While he implied that monographs, anthologies, encyclopedias, and mirrors-for-princes were usually transmitted as the work of an identifiable individual,²⁵ he utilized the criteria of authorial intention—entertainment versus education—and of comprehensive contents—encyclopedia defined as multi-subject compilation—to distinguish between anthologies and encyclopedias.²⁶ But in the early 1980s, after Seeger A. Bonbakker had reread the standard works by Ilse Lichtenstädter, Carlo-Alfonso Nallino, and Charles Pellat while working on the *adab* article for the *Cambridge History of Arabic Literature*, he declared that *adab* cannot be restricted to belles-lettres and entertainment and comprises also general knowledge.²⁷ It is remarkable that the broader definition of *adab* followed from Bonebakker's efforts to claim the *ʿUyūn al-aḥbār* (The Best Stories) by ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Qutaiba (died 889) as an *adab*

bringen zu können." (280); and "Ebensowenig gibt es – ohne theoretische Vorklärung – eine rationale Begründung dafür, welche Gründe überhaupt zählen." (296).

24. Rosenthal, *Knowledge Triumphant*: 252–253 (belles-lettres) and 283 (educational literature).

25. For the famous exception of the *Rasā'il Iḥwān al-ṣafā'* (Letters by the Brethren of Purity), a compilation of hermetic texts assumed to be written by a group of anonymous Ismāʿīlite scholars from tenth-century Basra, see: Marquet, "Iḥwān al-Ṣafā'." Today we do not associate a contemporary encyclopedia with a single author; Mircea Eliade, for example, is the general editor of the *Encyclopedia of Religion*.

26. The distinction between contents—more than one topic—and form—excerpts from other sources—is mixed up in this characterization of medieval Arabic prose by Leder and Kilpatrick, "Classical Arabic Prose": "Generally, though, a compilation has one or more subjects, divided where necessary, into separate sections." (17).

27. Bonebakker, "Early Arabic Literature": 390 and 414; compare his CHAL article "*Adab*": 30.

anthology, effectively taking this compilation as the literary model according to which he defined *adab*.²⁸ This link between *adab* and Ibn Qutaibas' *ʿUyūn al-aḥbār* has influenced later studies of medieval Arabic compilations. In her dissertation on misers in medieval Arabic literature,²⁹ Fedwa Malti-Douglas derived the organizational principles of anthologies from the *ʿUyūn al-aḥbār*.³⁰ With regard to her understanding of anthologies, she followed Rosenthal as well as her academic advisor Bonebakker. She stated that "[e]ncyclopedism does not equal *adab*,"³¹ because *adab* comprised a field of scholarly learning, the subjects of which were preserved in anthologies that meet standards of literary excellence.³² Her definition implies that everything goes in encyclopedias, but the contents of anthologies reflect a sense of academic and aesthetic discretion. In the late 1990s, Stephanie B. Thomas took the same stance toward the *ʿUyūn al-aḥbār* and anthologies in the dissertation about the *Muḥāḍarāt*. On the one hand, she compared Rāḡib's compilation with the *ʿUyūn al-aḥbār* because this work is "commonly referred to as the archetypal 'adab encyclopedia' <sic>."³³ On the other hand, she argued that the

28. Rosenthal also discussed Ibn Qutaiba's *ʿUyūn al-aḥbār* in detail, but he focused on how Ibn Qutaiba explicated concepts of knowledge (*ʿilm*) in his anthology, and did not consider whether to classify the *ʿUyūn al-aḥbār* as entertainment or education; compare: Rosenthal, *Knowledge Triumphant*: 254–265.

29. UCLA 1977, published in 1985 under the title *Structures of Avarice: The Bukhalāʾ in Medieval Arabic Literature*.

30. Malti-Douglas, *Structures*: 11–14.

31. Malti-Douglas, *Structures*: 16 note 45, compare 12.

32. Malti-Douglas, *Structures*: "three aspects ... are significant ... They are: 1) the notion of 'scholarship;' 2) the concept of an anthology; and 3) the principle of selection on the basis of literary merit." (11).

33. Thomas, "The Concept of *Muḥāḍara*": 153; compare 17 and 237–238. The exemplary status of the *ʿUyūn al-aḥbār* seems so well established that Thomas did not explain how Ibn Qutaiba's compilation actually acquired this reputation. But she observed later that Rāḡib excerpted the *ʿUyūn al-aḥbār* for the *Muḥāḍarāt*: 201; compare Sārīsī, *Al-Rāḡib al-Isfahānī*: 151.

Muḥāḍarāt is an anthology because an encyclopedia covers, according to our contemporary understanding, all in an objective manner without any concern for merit and quality.³⁴

It is surprising that the terms *anthology* and *encyclopedia* prove so intractable when applied to Arabic literature. Although Malti-Douglas and Thomas firmly rejected the term *encyclopedia*, neither addressed the question of whether Arabic anthologies are works of prose or poetry.³⁵ While Geert Jan van Gelder did not hesitate to call Ibn Qutaiba's *Uyūn al-aḥbār* an "encyclopaedic anthology,"³⁶ Hilary Kilpatrick shunned both terms in her study of the *Kitāb al-aḡānī* (Book of Songs) by Abū al-Faraḡ al-Iṣfahānī (897–967 or 972).³⁷ The situation is further complicated by the absence of a technical terminology for compilations that did not belong to the curricula of legal and religious studies.³⁸ The term *muḥtārāt* appeared already in the twelfth century in the titles of

34. Thomas, "The Concept of *Muḥāḍara*": "its [i.e., encyclopedia's] (modern) connotations of neutrality, comprehensiveness and length" (5); and "'Encyclopedia' in the western tradition connotes comprehensiveness, but not necessarily the 'best of the best' theme typical of adab collections." (10–11); compare 11 note 22.

35. Malti-Douglas herself exclusively examined the prose anecdotes in her sources; for a critical consideration of this decision, see: Fanjul, Review of *Structures*: 130–131. The *Muḥāḍarāt* is, for example, considered a work of medieval Arabic prose by Leder and Kilpatrick, "Classical Arabic Prose": 17.

36. Geert Jan van Gelder in Binkley, *Pre-modern Encyclopaedic Texts*: 252.

37. The terms *anthology* and *encyclopedia* are not listed in the "Index of Subjects and Terms" in: Kilpatrick, *Making the Great Book of Songs*: 433–435.

38. Collections of *ḥadīḥ* (stories about the prophet Muḥammad), for example, are divided into *muṣannaf* (topical arrangement) and *musnad* (arrangement based on transmitters); compare Charles Pellat in "Mawsū'a": "the idea of an encyclopedia was not expressed in Classical Arabic, ... Nevertheless, the absence of a perfectly descriptive term ... does not necessarily imply the non-existence of a tendency to encyclopaedic writing" (903).

collections of Arabic poetry, and has today also the meaning *anthology*.³⁹ Yet the term *encyclopedia* is in contemporary Arabic translated with the twentieth-century neologism *mawsūʿa*.⁴⁰

Persian anthologies, however, remain to be studied.⁴¹ As in Arabic, there is a variety of terms that cannot be clearly distinguished from each other, while in contemporary Persian the term *anthology* is translated with the twentieth-century neologism *gulčīn-i adabī*.⁴² In his survey of Persian anthologies in the second edition of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, J.T.P. de Bruijn observed that Persian anthologies can be works of prose as well as works of poetry.⁴³ Since he did not consider anthologies a specific genre of Persian literature, he also regarded as anthologies commonplace books and scrapbooks compiled for personal use, as well as unique miscellanies of selected works made to order. Rāwandī described the *Rāḥat* as *mağmūʿ* or *mağmūʿe*,⁴⁴ and de

39. “*Mukhtārāt*”: 526–528, where Andras Hamori defined an anthology as a collection of poetry; compare: Wehr & Cowan: 309 s.v. *muḥṭār*.

40. “*Mawsūʿa*”: 903 and 907; compare: Wehr & Cowan: 1253.

41. “*Mukhtārāt*”: 529; compare: Melikian-Chirvani, “*Anthology*”: 151–152.

42. “*Mukhtārāt*”: 528–529; compare: Muʿīn, 3: 3365 s.v. *gulčīn*. No survey of medieval or contemporary Persian words for the term *encyclopedia* is provided by Ž. Vesel’s survey of “Persian writings of an encyclopaedic character” in “*Mawsūʿa*”: 907–908.

43. “*Mukhtārāt*”: 529.

44. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: 44 lines 19 and 22; 58 line 10; and 67 line 7 (*Rāḥat*); 57 lines 3–4 (compilation of poetry); and 58 line 11 (compilation of prose and poetry); compare its metaphorical uses: 40 lines 2–3 (human character); and 51 lines 16–17 (comprehensive knowledge). In the following I translate the terms *mağmūʿ* and *mağmūʿe* as compilation; see below, chapter III, notes 137, 168, 176, and 204; and chapter IV, note 84.

Bruijn and Assadullah Souren Melikian-Chirvani translated these terms as anthology.⁴⁵

I. c. Encyclopedias in western and non-western literatures

In contrast, the European history of the terms *anthology* and *encyclopedia*, which are both Greek neologisms from the late fifteenth century, is well researched.⁴⁶ Nondescript titles of compilations were the rule in Antiquity and the Latin Middle Ages, and the terms *encyclopedia* and *anthology* were not coined before the end of the fifteenth century. Humanists used *encyclopedia* retrospectively for Greek and Latin works that offered a comprehensive survey of a single subject or a complete curriculum. Only at the beginning of the sixteenth century did *encyclopedia*, *commonplace book*, and *florilegium*—a Latin loanword that is a literal translation of the neologism ἀνθολόγιον—appear in the titles of compilations, modeled on the masterworks of Antiquity. There are three areas of contemporary research on encyclopedias: western encyclopedias since the eighteenth century, western encyclopedias from Antiquity to the eighteenth century, and research on non-western encyclopedias.

The mother of all modern western encyclopedias is *L'Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des arts, des sciences et des métiers* (1751–1780) by Denis Diderot (1713–1784) and Jean Le Rond d'Alembert (1717–1783). This monumental alphabetical

45. “Mukhtārāt”: “most often a volume of prose texts by more than one author” (528); and Melikian-Chirvani, “*Anthology*”: “assembled [texts]” (152).

46. Grubmüller, “*Florilegium*”: 606; and Meier, “*Enzyklopädie*”: 451; compare: Rigg, “*Anthologies*,” and Rigg, “*Commonplace Books*.” For a summary of the current debate on the first use of the term *encyclopedia*, as well as the bibliographical references to the standard works, see: Robert L. Fowler in Binkley, *Pre-modern Encyclopaedic Texts*: 27–29. In medieval studies, scholars use the term *florilegium* instead of the term *anthology*; see, for example: Rouse and Rouse, *Authentic Witnesses*: 5–7.

lexicon embodied the educational project of the Enlightenment, advancing the spread of science and rationality through western Europe. The work established the literary genre of the modern encyclopedia, and research on western encyclopedias can be divided into research on encyclopedias before and after *L'Encyclopédie*. Whereas studies of the work by Diderot and d'Alembert and their various successors contribute to the debate of how the Enlightenment influenced and shaped specific western concepts of modernity and humanism, studies of encyclopedias that belong to the premodern western tradition, comprising works in Greek, Latin, and the European vernaculars from Antiquity to the beginning of the eighteenth century, provide arguments for the discussion of how to understand the rise of western Europe since the eleventh century. For the exploration of premodern encyclopedias is informed by assumptions about continuities and breaks within the course of Europe's intellectual history from Athens in the fifth century BCE to Paris in the eighteenth century CE. This scholarship grew from research on education and the transmission of knowledge in Antiquity and the Middle Ages.⁴⁷ Its focus reflects the influence of cultural history and anthropology on classics and medieval studies, so that the range of the prestigious classical canon of historiography, philosophy, and fiction has been widened to accommodate research on non-fiction as well as other written sources. Since premodern encyclopedias belong to various literary genres, the term *encyclopedia*

47. For a survey of twentieth-century research on medieval encyclopedias in both Latin and west-European vernaculars, see: Meier, "Grundzüge": 468–471 and 492–494; and Meier, "Enzyklopädie": 452–453. In the *Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, encyclopedias are lumped together with dictionaries and divided into three groups; see: "Encyclopedias and Dictionaries": 442–446 (Arabic and Persian); 446–447 (Byzantine); and 447–450 (European). Their authors perceived both dictionaries and encyclopedias as handbooks and reference works, and neither discussed questions of etymology, word history, or literary genre.

cannot refer to the literary genre of premodern encyclopedias, and instead denotes a paradigm reflecting the contents and the intended uses of written compilations.⁴⁸

The focus on explaining the unquestionable leadership of the western world with regard to science, technology, and economics since the nineteenth century is also the backdrop for research on non-western encyclopedias conducted by western scholars. The study of a non-western civilization offers the opportunity to explore the intellectual differences between our mind-set and theirs.⁴⁹ The approaches range from identification with an exotic, though essentially similar, civilization to the rejection of an alien, thus inferior, civilization, but the invisible heart of the matter is always the self-image of our western civilization.⁵⁰ Although the hermeneutic problem of how to mediate between a non-western and western civilization is common to all research on non-western literatures conducted by western scholars, the methodological challenge of how to determine the relevance of research on western encyclopedias for the examination of non-western encyclopedias is usually ignored. On the one hand, the unquestioned assumption that independent research on non-western literatures can be conducted with a western terminology leads, for example, to the above analyzed impasse of whether Arabic

48. Catherine Rubincam in Binkley, *Pre-modern Encyclopaedic Texts*: “encyclopaedic literature as a paradigm, in which texts can participate, rather than a prescriptively defined genre” (127).

49. Fuhrmann, *Bildung*: “Es gab allerdings in der Philosophischen Fakultät Zonen, die nicht unbedingt zum Kanon der Allgemeinbildung gehörten: die Fächer, die einzig der Forschung dienten, die nicht auch künftige Lehrer heranzuziehen hatten. Dieser Bereich des Exzentrischen nahm während der zweiten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts deutlich zu: Um den Kern kristallisierten sich Spezialitäten zumal für die altorientalischen und außereuropäischen Kulturen,” (79).

50. Rosaldo, “From the Door of His Tent”: “Implicit in the *Annales* program is a notion, analogous to the ethnographer’s term *social structure*, ... , that enables the historian to assert that his subjects resemble him because of demonstrable structural continuities that endure over a long timespan (*longue durée*).” (82).

anthologies are encyclopedias. On the other hand, the equally unquestioned assumption of an essential incomparability between western and any non-western civilization is used to reject research on western literatures as being inapplicable for the study of non-western literatures.⁵¹ But this attitude disregards that both non-western and premodern western encyclopedias share two characteristics: They are compilations of non-fictional texts designed for educational purposes, yet their pragmatic uses are not bound to the conventions of a specific literary genre. Unlike western encyclopedias that were derived from the model of *L'Encyclopédie*, the term *encyclopedia* can only identify a paradigm, and not a literary genre, if applied to premodern and non-western encyclopedias.

I. d. Analyzing composite sources

The *Muḥāḍarāt* and the *Rāḥat* are unwieldy works because they consist of a multitude of excerpts from a variety of secular and sacred sources. The state of research on Middle-Eastern anthologies and encyclopedias indicates the absence of a heuristic terminology to identify and examine these complex composite sources from different perspectives. I therefore propose to distinguish between form (compilation and miscellany), literary genre (anthology), paradigm (encyclopedia), and use (textbook). It is particularly important to consider form and paradigm separately because this differentiation reveals

51. With regard to research on Persian historiography, Julie Scott Meisami and Sholeh Quinn are representative of this attitude; see: Meisami, "History as Literature": 18; and Quinn, *Historical Writing*: 23. With regard to research on Chinese encyclopedias, see: Kaderas, *Leishu*: "das Begriffskonzept der 'encyclopaedia', das in der Renaissance entstanden ist, [konnotiert] zweifelsfrei einen innerlich 'kreisartig' zusammengehörigen Kanon von Wissenschaften der *artes*. Das Wort kann daher *eben nicht* undifferenziert auf andere Werke übertragen werden, die aus Kulturtraditionen stammen, deren Wissensordnungen mit völlig anderen Komponenten als denen der *artes liberales* konstituiert werden." (41–42).

the logical faults of the syllogism that, because all encyclopedias are compilations and most premodern works are compilations, most premodern works are encyclopedias.⁵²

With regard to their form, the *Muḥāḍarāt* and the *Rāḥat* are compilations.

Rāwandī's compilation can be more specifically described as miscellany, organized in three thematic parts with three distinct groups of sources. With regard to their literary genre, the *Muḥāḍarāt* is an anthology, surveying the tradition of literary Arabic in verse and prose. Since the negation of a characteristic does not contribute to the definition of literary genre, there is little heuristic value in interpreting the unique *Rāḥat* as a highly original exception to a certain literary genre that in turn can only be grasped in the consequent violation of all its conventions.⁵³ With regard to their paradigm, the *Muḥāḍarāt* and the *Rāḥat* are single-subject encyclopedias. Rāḡib's anthology covers a multitude of topics to survey the tradition of literary Arabic. Rāwandī's miscellany contains a selection of texts about justice, politics, and courtly etiquette to commemorate the Great Seljuq sultanate in western Iran. But the two works are nevertheless encyclopedias because both subjects are treated comprehensively.⁵⁴ With regard to their use, the *Muḥāḍarāt* and the *Rāḥat* are textbooks. They were designed to foster the

52. Robert L. Fowler in Binkley, *Pre-modern Encyclopaedic Texts*: 22 note 50.

53. To which degree the patronage of Islamic courts encouraged the composition of unique compilations that were not bound to genre conventions has not yet been researched; see J.T. P. de Bruijn's remark about "private volumes" in "Muḥtārāt": 529.

54. For the concept of a single-subject encyclopedia, defined as the comprehensive treatment of a single subject, see: Robert L. Fowler in Binkley, *Pre-modern Encyclopaedic Texts*: "the following works and topics are relevant to the theme of pre-modern encyclopedic works: works commonly called encyclopedias, such as those of Pliny and Vincent of Beauvais, which anticipate in form the modern encyclopedia; comprehensive treatments of a single subject that imitate the broader encyclopedia; more generally, works that bear some essential relation to the *omne scibile*; and the *omne scibile* itself, both its conception and the methods used to capture it." (14); compare 7–10 and 23–26.

education of their readers, though both authors employed different didactic strategies. The Arabic anthology is prescriptive, and the Persian miscellany descriptive. For the mastery of literary Arabic is to a greater extent rule-bound than the evaluation of political decisions.

The term *textbook* denotes in contemporary American English “a book used in schools or colleges for the formal study of a subject.”⁵⁵ Although medieval Middle-Eastern compilations have at first glance nothing in common with mass-market textbooks for twenty-first-century students, employing *textbook* as a heuristic term has the advantage of highlighting the educational purpose of the *Muḥāḍarāt* and the *Rāḥat*. At the current state of research it is almost impossible to overstate the pragmatic uses of these works. In Arabic and Persian studies alike, compilations are still evaluated according to the Romantic criterion of artistic originality or the historicist criterion of objective witness. The standard criticism that compilations are lacking in originality becomes a moot point if compilations of non-fictional texts written for educational purposes are approached as textbooks, inasmuch as textbooks are, by definition, not designed as original, creative writing about any given subject. In the *Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Thomas S. Kuhn introduced the heuristic distinction between textbooks that initiate students to a certain field of knowledge, acquainting them with the fundamentals of a certain discipline, on the one hand and original research that

55. *American Heritage Dictionary*, 4th ed.: 1790.

contributes to this field of knowledge on the other hand.⁵⁶ Since Kuhn observed that the emergence of textbooks is secondary to the formation of a scientific paradigm, the heuristic distinction allowed him to demonstrate that a concept of science derived from science textbooks is necessarily different from one based on the history of scientific research. But employing *textbook* as a heuristic term has the additional advantage of emphasizing that the *Muḥāḍarāt* and the *Rāḥat* were written for specific audiences. Compilations also originated as personal notebooks of excerpts.⁵⁷ Keeping a commonplace book was a widely used learning device because the note-taking documented, and hence supported, the student's systematic reading for his studies. Conversely, commonplace books, unlike anthologies, were not compiled with the intention to be perused by another person. Commonplaces, however, were occasionally used to organize the contents of compilations,⁵⁸ and anthologies and commonplace books can appear as indistinguishable from each other, unless their different audiences are taken into consideration.

In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, when Rāgib and Rāwandī composed the *Muḥāḍarāt* and the *Rāḥat* in western Iran, learned men, intellectuals, and scientists had been exchanging ideas across the Islamic world (*umma*) for over four centuries.

56. Kuhn, *Structure*: "the textbooks from which each new scientific generation learns to practice its trade. Inevitably, however, the aim of such books is persuasive and pedagogic; a concept of science drawn from them is no more likely to fit the enterprise that produced them than an image of a national culture drawn from a tourist brochure or a language text. This essay attempts to show that we have been misled by them in fundamental ways. Its aim is a sketch of the quite different concept of science that can emerge from the historical record of the research activity itself." (1).

57. For a reflection on the compilation of his personal commonplace book, see: Baker, "Narrow Ruled."

58. Burke, *Social History*: 95 and 181.

Scholarly communities and research networks, as well as textbooks and the accompanying methods of how to instruct the next generation, were fully developed. Rāḡib and Rāwandī did not invent new literary genres, yet the contents of the *Muḥāḍarāt* and the *Rāḥat* illustrate how they utilized well-established conventions of transmitting knowledge to compile an anthology of literary Arabic and a miscellany about the Great Seljuq sultanate. The arrangement of their contents is thus the most original aspect of these textbooks, conceived as single-subject encyclopedias.⁵⁹

I. e. Contextualizing textbooks

In the following I analyze the *Muḥāḍarāt* and the *Rāḥat* with regard to their circulation, their reception, and the arrangement of their contents. Despite the wealth of Islamic manuscripts, there is no contemporary external evidence to double-check information about Rāḡib and Rāwandī that was gleaned from the text of the compilations, biographical dictionaries, book catalogues, and references to either the authors or their

59. Christel Meier in Keller, *Pragmatische Schriftlichkeit*: “Die Geschichte der Enzyklopädie nicht nur des Mittelalters ist eine Geschichte ihrer Reorganisationen. Das gilt für diese Gattung in strikterem Sinn als für andere, da Stofforganisation hier essentiell, das heißt die eigentliche Werkschöpfung ist.” (158). For Meier, however, medieval western encyclopedias form a literary genre (*Gattung*).

For the compilation of diverse material as an intellectual achievement, compare Lewis, *Studies*: “Characteristically, medieval man ... was an organizer, a codifier, a man of system. His ideal could be not unfairly summed up in the old housewifely maxim ‘A place for everything and everything in its (right) place’. ... the tranquil, indefatigable, exultant energy of a passionately logical mind ordering a huge mass of heterogeneous details into unity. They desire unity and proportion, all the classical virtues, just as keenly as the Greeks did. But they have a greater and more varied collections of things to fit in. And they delight to do it. ... It is out of this that the medieval picture of the universe evolved: a chance collection of materials, an inability to say ‘Bosh’, a temper systematic to the point of morbidity, great mental powers, unwearied patience, and a robust delight in their work. All these factors led them to produce the greatest, most complex, specimen of syncretism or harmonization which, perhaps, the world has ever known. They tidied up the universe.” (44–45).

In Arabic studies, the necessity of analyzing the arrangement of the contents of anthologies has been argued by Malti-Douglas, *Structures*: 14; Leder and Kilpatrick, “Classical Arabic Prose”: 15–18; and Thomas, “Concept of *Muḥāḍara*”: 19–20.

compilations in other works. Although a heavy reliance on unverifiable data is rather normal with regard to research on medieval Islamic societies, this lack of external evidence remains problematic from a methodological point of view. The validity of assumptions that are exclusively based on internal evidence is difficult to challenge, whereas the scarcity of external evidence inevitably increases the amount of conjectures necessary to first develop the assumptions and then reach the conclusions. I cannot change the given limitations of my sources, but I juxtapose the direct codicological evidence of manuscripts and imprints with the indirect evidence of their reception in other written sources whenever possible. It is the physical existence of the manuscripts and imprints of the *Muḥāḍarāt* and the *Rāḥat* that proves the historical reality of these textbooks and raises the question of how Middle-Eastern audiences used them over the centuries.

I conduct this analysis in three steps. In the second chapter, I explore the socioeconomic context of the *Muḥāḍarāt* and the *Rāḥat*. The circulation of manuscripts and imprints provides a diachronic perspective on the transmission of knowledge in Islamic societies between the eleventh and twentieth centuries. Their distinctive histories of reception document that over time these textbooks moved from western Iran to Istanbul, though they were popular with different audiences. In the third chapter, I sift the biographical data for Rāḡib and Rāwandī to complement the diachronic perspective with the synchronic perspective on the seats of knowledge in western Iran before the Mongol conquest. The authors' official biographies suggest that a non-elite book market and demand for private education and tutoring allowed learned men, who otherwise did not

distinguish themselves among their contemporaries, to make a living independent of the patronage of city elites or ruling dynasties. In the fourth chapter, I focus on the compilations to analyze the relationship between the organization of their contents and their educational goals. While the reliance on written texts for the transmission of knowledge is indisputable evidence for the importance of literacy with regard to education, Rāḡib and Rāwandī paid tribute also to oral practices. In the *Muḥāḍarāt* the references to conversation and debate allude to the concept of a *umma*, in which all Muslims communicate with each other in Arabic. In the *Rāḥat*, the ceremonies of the Rum Seljuq court are reflected in the invocations on behalf of its dedicatee Kai Ḥusrau and in the poems adduced as evidence for Great Seljuq politics. I conclude this study in the fifth chapter with a reflection on the significance of these textbooks for the intellectual history of Islamic societies.

II Circulation and uses of textbooks: Quality and quantity

To resume the fundamental principle of Gadamer's hermeneutics, there is more truth in the later efficacy of a text, in the series of its subsequent readings, than in its supposedly 'original' meaning.

Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology*

In medieval Islamic societies, the gap between a work's documented history of reception and an almost completely undocumented author to whom the work has been ascribed is fairly common. The poetic oeuvres ascribed to Imru' al-Qais (sixth century) and Rūdakī (died c.940), for example, are not supplemented with any external historical evidence for their lives. Moreover, the sources that are available for eleventh- and twelfth-century Arabic and Persian literatures usually do not comprise autobiographical texts, such as diaries, letters, or sketch books, from which glimpses of an author's intention and personality could be gleaned. But such evidence is also rarely available for western authors. Most often the works ascribed to an author are the only evidence of his, sometimes her, existence. The reception of a work can be traced indirectly through its transmission and indicates how audiences utilized it, so that the evidence of its transmission documents its circulation and use. Reception and transmission are interrelated historical processes that in turn reflect changes and continuities in reading practices and episteme, since a work that is no longer useful for audiences often falls from grace within the canon of transmitted, and thereby preserved, texts. Even though an analysis of a work's reception cannot substitute for authorial intention, such an analysis is constructed from data preserved in manuscripts, imprints, biographical dictionaries and

book catalogues, as well as other written sources, and thus based on evidence and not on conjecture.¹

The discussion of the reception of the *Muḥāḍarāt* and the *Rāḥat* combines two different perspectives: a diachronic overview of a thousand years of circulation and a detailed examination of evidence for their uses.² Three groups of evidence document the reception: manuscripts and imprints of the *Muḥāḍarāt* and the *Rāḥat*, entries in biographical dictionaries and book catalogues, and references to the *Muḥāḍarāt* and the *Rāḥat* in other works. Manuscripts and imprints are the products of different technologies with different socioeconomic frameworks that determine who has access to books and how the accessible books can be used.³ Manuscripts and imprints are not only texts that can be read. The traditional focus on written texts as the most important means of recording and transmitting knowledge makes it easy to overlook that books themselves

1. "Eine Literaturgeschichte des Mittelalters, in der so getan würde, als besäßen wir die alten Texte, so wie wir Goethes Texte besitzen, würde ihre Aufgabe verfehlen. Mittelalterliche Literatur ist nur durch die Überlieferungsgeschichte zugänglich. Erhalten sind nicht die Werke selbst, sondern nur die Abschriften davon... Die Erwartung der positivistischen Mittelalterphilologie, mit den Mitteln der Textkritik den Wortlaut der Originale wiedergewinnen zu können, hat sich in vielen Fällen nicht erfüllt. Für eine Autor- und Werk-bezogene Literaturgeschichte ist das bedauerlich. Nicht selten bedeutet der Überlieferungsbefund eine Einschränkung oder Verunsicherung des Wissens über den mittelalterlichen Text und sein Werk. ... Viel wichtiger ist jedoch den Gewinn zu sehen, den die Literaturgeschichte aus den Überlieferungsverhältnissen ziehen kann. Wenn mittelalterliche Literatur nur über die Überlieferung zugänglich ist, muß sie auch so beschrieben werden." (Bumke, *Literatur als Aufgabe*: 38–39).

2. "The correct posture of the historian is the one that allows him or her the utmost freedom to move from a microscopic to a macroscopic dimension, and vice versa – to combine long shots and close-ups as in a movie, ... (A close-up can be used to reveal what is hidden from view in the long shot, but so can a long shot disclose what is invisible in the close-up.) ... The general is not the goal, the final point of destination, because in the case of history it is not true that a higher level of abstraction and generality involves a better grasp of reality. Historical generalizations do not preempt the epistemological value of a full immersion in the configurations of particulars." (Gianna Pomata in Medick and Trepp, *Geschlechtergeschichte und Allgemeine Geschichte*: 115–116).

3. For a recent glimpse of the ongoing debate about the consequences of the introduction of the printing press in western Europe, see: Grafton and others, "How Revolutionary was the Print Revolution."

are commodities, and thus physical objects of social practice—comparable, for example, to beakers and dishes. Approaching books as commodities reveals the wealth of socioeconomic data that are documented by books aside from the texts recorded on their pages. Colophons and copyright statements can contain information about who made a book, when, and for whom. Owners and booksellers can mark their property with inscriptions, seals, ex-libris, and prices. Readers scribble on flyleaves, between the lines, and on the margins. Such codicological evidence documents the socioeconomic context of manuscripts and printed books, whereas entries in biographical dictionaries and book catalogues offer the opportunity to compare the traces of use and circulation, as documented through manuscripts and books, with the perception of the very same works and their authors by men who compiled structured surveys about authoritative scholars in a given field and descriptive catalogues of known and extant works. The available evidence of transmission indicates two distinct histories of reception for the *Muḥāḍarāt* and the *Rāḥat*. Rāḡib is the author of acclaimed lexicographical and philosophical works and his *Muḥāḍarāt* was studied between Tehran and Istanbul during a time span of thousand years. In contrast, the *Rāḥat* was only preserved in a single manuscript, and Rāwandī appears as an obscure calligrapher and theologian.

II. a. The many manuscripts of the *Muḥāḍarāt*

Manuscripts of Rāḡib's anthology have circulated in Islamic societies since the twelfth century. The total number of manuscripts is difficult to gauge, since the number of preserved manuscripts is not necessarily directly proportional to the number of

Table 1. Arabic manuscripts of the *Muhāḍarāt* in west-European libraries.

18 October 1754 London, British Library, MS arab. Add. 7305.

6 February 1129	London, British Library, MS arab. Add. 18,529.
April/May 1200	Berlin, Staatsbibliothek – Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung, MS arab. Wetzstein II 1175.
July 1639	Berlin, Staatsbibliothek – Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung, MS arab. Wetzstein II 424.

4. For considerations of how a book's size and material value influenced the chances of survival in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Britain, compare: Kristian Jensen in Hellinga and Trapp, *History of the Book*: 354–356.

5. Email by Dr. Arnoud J.M. Vrolijk, Assistant Curator at the Legatum Warnerianum in the Leiden University Library, 5 February 2001. Compare what Joseph von Hammer (1774–1856) experienced at the beginning of the nineteenth century: “Wiewohl ich mir alle Mühe gegeben habe, aus Konstantinopel ein vollständiges, correctes und schön geschriebenes Exemplar dieses auf keiner europäischen Bibliothek, aber wohl auf denen Konstantinopels, befindlichen oft als trefflich gerühmten Werkes zu erhalten, so ist mein Wunsch doch nur in Betreff der schönen Schrift vollkommen erfüllet worden.” (Ta‘ālibī, *Muhtasarār*: VI).

6. For codicological descriptions of the manuscripts, see: Berlin – Ahlwardt, *Verzeichnis*, 7: 329–333 s.v. 3346-8350; Halle (Saale) – Wehr, *Verzeichnis*: 42 s.v. 116; Leiden – De Goeje and Houtsma, *Catalogus codicum Arabicorum*: 276–277 s.v. CCCCLXIV; London – Cureton and Rieu, *Catalogus codicum manuscriptorum orientalium*: 333–334 s.v. DCCXXVII, and 439 s.v. MXCIV; and Vienna – Flügel, *Handschriften*, 1: 332 s.v. 360, and 341–343 s.v. 369-370; compare: Duda, *Islamische Handschriften*, 1: 283 and 291.

Undated complete codices

Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, MS arab. A.F. 144-145.

Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, MS arab. N.F. 51.

Undated fragments

Berlin, Staatsbibliothek – Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung, MS arab. Petermann 105.

Berlin, Staatsbibliothek – Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung, MS arab. Sprenger 1218.

Berlin, Staatsbibliothek – Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung, MS arab. Wetzstein II 423.

Halle, Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Sachsen-Anhalt – Bibliothek der DMG, MS arab. 116.

Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, MS arab. Mixt. 37.

Undated excerpt

Leiden, University Library – Legatum Warnerianum, MS arab. Or. 178 (1).

There are thirty-two Arabic and three Persian manuscripts of Rāḡib's anthology in collections outside western Europe.⁷ Carl Brockelmann (1868–1956) did not list a manuscript in the former Soviet Union,⁸ India or North Africa, but he knew of twenty-four Arabic manuscripts of the *Muḥāḍarāt* in Cairo, Damascus, Istanbul and Meshed.⁹

7. One of those thirty-two manuscripts is not listed by Brockelmann or Muḡāhid: Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS arab. Yeni Cāmi 1004. Compare: *Yiñī ḡāmi*: 53 s.v. 1004.

8. In the 1920s Helmut Ritter found a manuscript with an *Adab al-ṣatranġ* (Etiquette of Chess) ascribed to Rāḡib in the library of the University of Kazan: Ritter, "Philologica I": 94; compare: *Dahabī, Siyar*, 18: 121 note 1; and Rāḡib, *Nawādir*: xiii note 29. Brockelmann, however, included this reference only in his Rāḡib article for the first edition of the *Encyclopedia of Islam*: Brockelmann, "al-Rāḡhib al-Iṣfahānī": 1186. This work could be an excerpt or a fragment of a larger work, such as the *Maḡma' al-balāġa* (Academy of Rhetoric) and *Muḥāḍarāt*. There are no further references to an *Adab al-ṣatranġ* ascribed to Rāḡib in biographical dictionaries, book catalogues, or scholarship.

9. GAL 1: 289, and GAL S 1: 506; compare: Brockelmann, "al-Rāḡhib al-Iṣfahānī": 1186. For the catalogues, see: Cairo – *Fihris al-kutub al-ʿarabīya*: 334 and 345; Damascus – *Siġill ḡalīl*: 86 s.v. 5-8; Istanbul – *Daftar-i kutubḡāne-yi Āyā; ṣūfiya*: 253 s.v. 4254-4258; *Daftar-i kutubḡāne-yi Salīm Āġā*: 84 s.v. 987; *Kūprīl-Ẓāde Muḡammad Pāšā*: 89 s.v. 1371-1380; Şeşen, *Catalogue*, 2: 98–102 s.v. 1371-1380; and Meshed – *Fihrist-i Kitābḡāne-yi mubārake* 3: part 15, 38 s.v. 108; compare: Fikrat, *Fihrist-i alifbā'ī*: 499 s.v. Muḥāḍarāt. I am greatly indebted to Dr. Arnoud J.M. Vrolijk for his generously providing me with copies of the relevant pages from the Damascus catalogue.

Aḥmad Muğāhid found another seven Arabic manuscripts in libraries in Meshed, Tabriz, Tehran and Yazd,¹⁰ as well as three Persian manuscripts of an abridged translation of the *Muḥāḍarāt* by Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ b. Muḥammad Bāqir Qazwīnī (died after 1705) in Meshed and Tehran.¹¹ Among the thirty-two Arabic manuscripts are fourteen fragments in Cairo, Istanbul, Meshed, Tabriz, Tehran, and Yazd,¹² and four abridgments in Cairo, Damascus, Istanbul, and Meshed,¹³ but only five complete codices in Istanbul, Tabriz, and

10. Rāḡib, *Nawādir*: xviii. Muğāhid lists a total of ten manuscripts. But the third is a microfilm of the twelfth-century fragment in the British Library (MS arab. Add. 18,529), the fifth is a fragment—Meshed, Kitābhāne-yi markazī-yi Āstān-i quds-i raḍawī, MS arab. 4403—that was already known to Brockelmann (GAL S 1: 506), and the tenth—Tehran, Kitābhāne-yi Madrase-yi ‘Alī-yi muṭaḥḥarī, MS arab. 315—Muğāhid assumes stolen. For six of the remaining seven manuscripts, see these catalogues: Meshed – Fikrat, *Fihrist-i alifbā’ī*: 499 s.v. Muḥāḍarāt; Tabriz – Yūnusī, *Fihrist*, 1: 1243–1244 s.v. 2559; Tehran – ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, *Fihrist*: 178–179 s.v. 144; Dānišpaḏūh and Munzawī, *Fihrist*, 8: 489 s.v. 1884; and 9: 1259 s.v. 2492; and Yazd – Ṭuraiḥī, *Fihrist*: 245. As regards the seventh manuscript—Tehran, Kitābhāne-yi Madrase-yi ‘Alī-yi muṭaḥḥarī, MS arab. 3265—I was unable to obtain a manuscript catalogue that also covered the *Muḥāḍarāt* manuscripts. The most recent manuscript catalogue for this collection is Munzawī, *Fihrist*; compare: Hadī Sharifī in Roper, *World Survey*, 1: 526–528. Sharif describes this work as a three-volume catalogue, covering the complete collection, even though it is presented as the continuation of an earlier two-volume catalogue by Ibn Yūsuf Šīrāzī, published in 1939. Munzawī organized this work as a title catalogue in alphabetical order, but unfortunately only the first two volumes, covering the letters *alif* to *dāl*, are owned by the libraries of UC Berkeley and UCLA and hence available through Interlibrary Loan.

11. Rāḡib, *Nawādir*: xxv. For the fragment—Tehran, Kitābhāne-yi Maḡlis-i šūrā-yi islāmī, MS pers. 308—see: Brockelmann, “al-Rāḡib al-Iṣfahānī”: 1186. For the other two manuscripts, see these catalogues: Meshed – *Fihrist-i Kitābhāne-yi mubārake* 3: section 15, 4 s.v. 11; compare: Fikrat, *Fihrist-i alifbā’ī*: 499 s.v. Muḥāḍarāt; and Tehran – Dānišpaḏūh and Munzawī, *Fihrist*, 13: 3452–3454 s.v. 4503.

12. Cairo, Dār al-kutub al-miṣrīya, MS arab. ādāb 275-276; Istanbul, Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS arab. Fazıl Ahmet Paşa 1372-1373 and 1375-1380; Meshed, Kitābhāne-yi markazī-yi Āstān-i quds-i raḍawī, MS arab. 4403; Tehran, Kitābhāne-yi Madrase-yi ‘Alī-yi Muṭaḥḥarī, MS arab. 3265; Tehran, Kitābhāne-yi markazī-yi Dānišgāh-i Tihirān, MS arab. 2492; and Yazd, Kitābhāne-yi Wazīrī, MS arab. 14,700.

13. Cairo, Dār al-kutub al-miṣrīya, MS arab. ādāb muḥtaṣar 97; Damascus, Dār al-kutub al-zāhirīya, MS arab. adabīyāt ‘Abd Allāh Bey; Istanbul, Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS arab. Fazıl Ahmet Paşa 1374; and Meshed, Kitābhāne-yi markazī-yi Āstān-i quds-i raḍawī, MS arab. 4990. The manuscript in Cairo is the copy of an abridgment compiled by Suyūṭī. Katip Çelebi did not mention Suyūṭī’s abridgment, though he knew of an *al-Muḥāḍarāt wa-l-muḥāwarāt* by Suyūṭī: Ḥāḡḡī Ḥalīfa, *Kaṣf al-ẓunūn* 5: 415. For the claim that this work is Suyūṭī’s abridgment of the *Muḥāḍarāt*, compare: Sārīsī, *Al-Rāḡib al-Iṣfahānī*: 87. For the reference to an eighteenth-century Cairene probate record, in which a *Ḥusn al-muḥāḍara* by Suyūṭī is listed among the books owned by a miller, compare: Hanna, *Praise of Books*: 100. But see also the nineteenth- and twentieth-century catalogues: Cairo – *Fihris al-kutub al-‘arabīya*: 345; Damascus – *Siḡill ḡalīl*: 86 s.v. 8; Istanbul – Şeşen, *Catalogue*, 2: 100 s.v. 1374; and Meshed – Fikrat, *Fihrist-i alifbā’ī*: 499 s.v. Muḥāḍarāt; compare: Rāḡib, *Nawādir*: xviii s.v. 9.

Tehran.¹⁴ Ten of the seventeen manuscripts in Istanbul were described in the 1986 catalogue of the Köprülü Library in Istanbul.¹⁵ Unfortunately, the available information for the remaining nine manuscripts in Damascus and Istanbul does not specify whether those are complete codices, fragments, or abridgments. In addition, no manuscripts has been identified as the abridgment by the obscure Maḥmūd b. Muḥammad b. al-Aurām, whose *muḥtaṣar* seems only to have been known to Katip Çelebi (1609–1657).¹⁶ The absence of any other trace for both author and abridgment is unusual because so many scholars excerpted Katip Çelebi's catalogue of Arabic literature. Finally, there is no recent confirmation—with the exception of the manuscript catalogue of the Köprülü Library in Istanbul and Muğāhid's research in Iranian libraries—of which Arabic manuscripts in collections in Cairo, Damascus, and Istanbul are still extant. Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Nāḥī, ʿUmar ʿAbd al-Rāḥmān al-Sārīsī, and ʿUmar al-Tabbāʿ recently published studies on Rāḡib and edited his works, but no one explicitly mentioned, and hence corroborated, that previously catalogued Arabic *Muḥāḍarāt* manuscripts are still extant.¹⁷

14. Istanbul, Hacı Selim Ağa Kütüphanesi, MS arab. 987; Istanbul, Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS arab. Fazıl Ahmet Paşa 1371 (1); Tabriz, Kitābhāne-yi millī, MS arab. 2559; Tehran, Kitābhāne-yi markazī-yi Dānişgāh-i Tihṙān, MS arab. 1884; and Tehran, Kitābhāne-yi ʿumūmī-yi maʿārif, MS arab. adabīyāt 144.

15. Istanbul, Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS arab. Fazıl Ahmet Paşa 1371-1380; and Şeşen, *Catalogue*, 2: 98–102 s.v. 1371-1380.

16. Ḥāḡḡī Ḥalīfa, *Kaṣf al-zunūn*: “li-Maḥmūd b. Muḥammad b. al-Aurām <sic> muḥtaṣarun murattabun ʿalā ṭalaṭin wa-ʿiṣṙina maqālatan auwalu-hū al-ḥamdu auwalan wa-āḡiran li-l-auwali wa-l-āḡiri ilā āḡiri-hī” *An abridgment that is arranged in twenty-three maqālas was written by Maḥmūd b. Muḥammad b. al-Aurām. Its beginning is: At the beginning and the end, the praise is for the first and the last..., and so forth* (5: 414–415); for the variant readings of Flügel's al-Aurām as al-Arwām and al-Ardām, compare: Ḥāḡḡī Ḥalīfa, *Kaṣf-el-zunūn*, 2: col.1609 note 2. Since neither author nor abridgment are mentioned in modern standard bibliographies and catalogues, it is important that Katip Çelebi quoted the abridgment's *incipit*, indicating that he had actually seen a copy of the work.

17. Nāḥī, *Ḥawālīd*: 62; Sārīsī, *Al-Rāḡib al-Isfahānī*: 288; and Rāḡib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ed. Tabbāʿ, 1: 12.

Table 2. Arabic and Persian manuscripts of the *Muḥāḍarāt* in collections outside western Europe.

Four complete dated Arabic codices

- 16 Oct. 1391 Istanbul, Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS arab. Fazıl Ahmet Paşa 1371 (1).
 8 July 1658 Tehran, Kitābhāne-yi markazī-yi Dānişgāh-i Tihirān, MS arab. 1884.
 1860 Tabriz, Kitābhāne-yi millī, MS arab. 2559.
 June/July 1868 Tehran, Kitābhāne-yi ʿumūmī-yi maʿārif, MS arab. adabīyāt 144.

One complete undated Arabic codex

Istanbul, Hacı Selim Ağa Kütüphanesi, MS arab. 987.

Eight dated Arabic fragments

- June 1183 Istanbul, Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS arab. Fazıl Ahmet Paşa 1378.
 17 Oct. 1388 Istanbul, Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS arab. Fazıl Ahmet Paşa 1380.
 1398 Istanbul, Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS arab. Fazıl Ahmet Paşa 1379.
 June 1510 Istanbul, Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS arab. Fazıl Ahmet Paşa 1375.
 1660 Tehran, Kitābhāne-yi Madrase-yi ʿAlī-yi Muṭahḥarī, MS arab. 3265.
 1703 Meshed, Kitābhāne-yi markazī-yi Āstān-i quds-i raḍawī, MS arab. 4403.
 16 Oct. 1712 Cairo, Dār al-kutub al-miṣrīya, MS arab. ādāb 276.
 2 May 1855 Cairo, Dār al-kutub al-miṣrīya, MS arab. ādāb 275.

Six undated Arabic fragments

- Istanbul, Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS arab. Fazıl Ahmet Paşa 1372.
 Istanbul, Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS arab. Fazıl Ahmet Paşa 1373.
 Istanbul, Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS arab. Fazıl Ahmet Paşa 1376.
 Istanbul, Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS arab. Fazıl Ahmet Paşa 1377.
 Tehran, Kitābhāne-yi markazī-yi Dānişgāh-i Tihirān, MS arab. 2492.
 Yazd, Kitābhāne-yi Wazīrī, MS arab. 14,700.

Two dated Arabic abridgments

- 14 April 1627 Cairo, Dār al-kutub al-miṣrīya, MS arab. ādāb muḥtaṣar 97.
 1834 Meshed, Kitābhāne-yi markazī-yi Āstān-i quds-i raḍawī, MS arab. 4990.

Two undated Arabic abridgments

- Damascus, Dār al-kutub al-zāhirīya, MS arab. adabīyāt ʿAbd Allāh Bey.
 Istanbul, Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS arab. Fazıl Ahmet Paşa 1374.

Nine Arabic manuscripts of whose precise contents is unknown

- Damascus, Dār al-kutub al-zāhirīya, MS arab. adabīyāt Murādīya.
 Damascus, Dār al-kutub al-zāhirīya, MS arab. adabīyāt Ḥayyāṭīn 1.
 Damascus, Dār al-kutub al-zāhirīya, MS arab. adabīyāt Ḥayyāṭīn 2.
 Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS arab. Ayasofya 4254.
 Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS arab. Ayasofya 4255.

Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS arab. Ayasofya 4256.
 Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS arab. Ayasofya 4257.
 Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS arab. Ayasofya 4258.
 Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS arab. Yeni Câmi 1004.

Undated codex of the abridged Persian translation

Tehran, Kitābhāne-yi Mağlis-i šūrā-yi islāmī, MS pers. 308.

Two undated fragments of the abridged Persian translation

Meshed, Kitābhāne-yi markazī-yi Āstān-i quds-i raḍawī, MS pers. 4306.

Tehran, Kitābhāne-yi markazī-yi Dānišgāh-i Tihirān, MS pers. 4503.

Fourteen of those thirty-five Arabic and Persian manuscripts are dated between 1183 and 1868. In addition, the catalogues contain details that provide a *terminus ad quem* for another nine among the remaining twenty-one undated manuscripts. The ten Arabic manuscripts in the Köprülü Library in Istanbul belonged to a *waqf* of the grand vizier Köprülü Mehmet Paşa (c.1578–1661), while the Köprülü Library itself was established by his elder son, the grand vizier Köprülüzade Fazıl Ahmet Paşa (1635–1676), after the father's death.¹⁸ Six of those ten manuscripts are undated, though two of them can be approximately dated because of dated ownership statements.¹⁹ For the other four manuscripts a cut-off date is established through the foundation of the library.²⁰ The Arabic manuscript in the Yeni Câmi in Istanbul was part of a *waqf* of the Ottoman

18. Istanbul, Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS arab. Fazıl Ahmet Paşa 1371-1380; compare: *Köprülüzade Muhammad Pāšā*: 89 s.v. 1371-1380, and 247. For the Köprülü Library, see: Gökbilgin and Trepp, "Köprülü": 261.

19. Istanbul, Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS arab. Fazıl Ahmet Paşa 1373 and 1377; and Şeşen, *Catalogue*, 2: 99–100 s.v. 1373, and 101 s.v. 1377.

20. Istanbul, Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS arab. Fazıl Ahmet Paşa 1372 and 1374-76; and Şeşen, *Catalogue*, 2: 99 s.v. 1372, and 100–101 s.v. 1374-1376.

sultan Ahmed III (ruled 1703–1730).²¹ Based on the sultan's date of death the manuscript was probably copied before 1730. Two manuscripts in Meshed—the dated fragment of the *Muḥāḍarāt* and its undated Persian translation—belonged to a *waqf* that in 1732 was established by Nādir Šāh Afšār (1688–1747), who, in 1736, seized power from the last Safavid shah.²² These two manuscripts were copied before the establishment of the *waqf* because they must have been extant to be included in the *waqf*.

Of the total of forty-seven manuscripts, I have examined nine Arabic manuscripts in London, Berlin, Halle (Saale) and Leiden²³ and obtained photocopies of the two Arabic manuscripts in the library of Tehran University.²⁴ These eleven manuscripts of the *Muḥāḍarāt* are all modest, not very attractive copies. All codices are of a medium size, neither small nor large.²⁵ The largest is the complete dated codex from the eighteenth

21. Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS arab. Yeni Cāmi 1004; and *Yiñī ġāmi'*: 53 s.v. 1004, and 103. For the Yeni Cāmi, which had been built by the sultan's grandmother Turhan Hatice Sultan and in whose tomb Ahmed III is buried, see: Peirce, *The Imperial Harem*: 206–208.

22. Meshed, Kitābhāne-yi markazī-yi Āstān-i quds-i raḍawī, MS arab. 4403; Meshed, Kitābhāne-yi markazī-yi Āstān-i quds-i raḍawī, MS pers. 4306; compare: *Fihrist-i Kitābhāne-yi mubārake* 3: part 15, 4 s.v. 11, and 38 s.v. 108. For Nādir Šāh's interest in the shrine of the eighth imam despite his official Sunnite agenda, see: “Āstān-e quds-e raḍawī”: 831; Perry, “Afsharids”: 587; and Perry, “Nādir Shāh Afshār”: 855.

23. Berlin, Staatsbibliothek – Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung, MS arab. Pet. 105; Berlin, Staatsbibliothek – Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung, MS arab. Spr. 1218; Berlin, Staatsbibliothek – Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung, MS arab. We. II 423-424; Berlin, Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Sachsen-Anhalt – Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft, MS arab. 116; Leiden, University Library – Legatum Warnerianum, MS arab. Or. 178 (1); London, British Library, MS arab. Add. 7305; and London, British Library, MS arab. Add. 18,529.

24. Tehran, Kitābhāne-yi markazī-yi Dānišgāh-i Tihirān, MS arab. 1884; and Tehran, Kitābhāne-yi markazī-yi Dānišgāh-i Tihirān, MS arab. 2492. I owe many thanks to Vlad Atanasiu for helping me to procure these photocopies.

25. For the exact measurements of the eleven manuscripts, as well as all other codicological details that are discussed in this context, see the physical descriptions in the catalogues quoted above, note 6.

century, whose size is comparable to a folio format.²⁶ It is noteworthy, however, that the two fragments from the twelfth century have a very similar square format, which, together with their other similarities regarding paper, script and layout, suggests that they were produced within the same regional bookmaking tradition.²⁷ All copies were written on rough, unpolished papers. The text shows only simple, functional illumination, usually limited to the rubrication or overlining of the chapter and section headings and the keywords. The manuscripts are also not distinguished by valuable bindings. None of the original bindings, if they ever existed, have been preserved, and the present bindings are either recent European bindings or simple Islamic bindings that were at an unknown time fitted to the codices. The low value of these manuscripts is further reflected in their colophons, ownership statements, ex-libris, and seal impressions.²⁸ Only the colophon of an eighteenth-century codex in London identifies the *aṣl*,²⁹ and just a scribal note in the complete seventeenth-century codex in Tehran mentions the patron.³⁰ Conversely, there

26. London, British Library, MS arab. Add. 7305.

27. London, British Library, MS arab. Add. 18,529; and Berlin, Staatsbibliothek – Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung, MS arab. We. II 1175.

28. For the consideration that silence with regard to sources and patrons might indicate a lower value and a lesser authority attached to a book, see: Lotte Hellinga in Hellinga and Trapp, *History of the Book*: 84 and 86.

29. London, British Library, MS arab. Add. 7305; compare: Cureton and Rieu, *Catalogus codicum manuscriptorum orientalium*: 333–334 s.v. DCCXXVII. The scribe Sulaimān b. al-Saiyid Dāwud b. Ḥaidar b. Aḥmad b. Maḥmūd al-Ḥusainī al-Mazyadī described the manuscript from which he worked: “Wa-qad naqala ‘an nushatin šūratān ta’rīḥu-hā iḥdā wa-tis‘īn wa-ḥamsami’a dāt ḥaṭṭ ḡabīy wa-rasm ḡair ḡalīy wa-min al-wahm ḡair ḡalīy” *He wrote the copy from a manuscript whose date was the hiḡra year 591 [i.e., 1195 CE] and which had an untrained writing and letters without clear shapes and was not free of errors (fol.401v).*

30. Tehran, Kitābhāne-yi markazī-yi Dānišgāh-i Tihārān, MS arab. 1884; compare: Dānišpažūh and Munzawī, *Fihrist* 8: 489. The one-volume manuscript has neither foliation nor pagination, but I did not add a foliation because the photocopy is unbound and out of order. The colophon at the end of the eleventh

are no references to proud owners who inscribed their names or marked their copies with their seals. The absence of a patron's names in the colophons corresponds to the observation that in the introduction Rāḡib does not mention a concrete reason—such as the name of a patron or a specific event—for composing the work.³¹ The author's silence is striking because the Arab-Islamic conventions of introducing a work offer the author the opportunity to state his intent, to make his pitch.³² Moreover, the complementary poetic traditions of *madḥ* and *hiġā'* indicate that identifying a man by his name was an accepted practice.³³ Understatement was not considered fashionable. Finally, the sequence of the *Muḥāḍarāt*'s twenty-five chapters is visually preserved in ten of the eleven manuscripts. The exception is the undated manuscript in Leiden, which is a

chapter is dated 8 July 1658 and is followed by a scribal note on the folio verso. The manuscript seems to have been planned as two volumes because the first and second part were written by different hands and the second part opens with its own title page: “al-ḥadd al-ṭānī ‘ašara min al-Muḥāḍarāt.” The scribe of the first part, ‘Abd al-Laṭīf b. Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Ṭarīf changed for colophon and note from an Ottoman *nash* to *iġāzī*. His additional note states that the manuscript had been ordered—“‘ullīqa ḥāḍ ā al-kitāb al-mubārak bi-rasm”—by Aḥmad Efendi Būstānzāde who served as judge in Constantine and Damascus—“al-qāḍī bi-madīnat al-Qusṭanṭīniya al-maḥrūsa sābiqan wa-yauma’idīn bi-madīnat Dimašq al-šām al-maḥmīya.”

31. Rāḡib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ed. Beirut: “wa-ba‘du saiyidu-nā—‘ammara Allāh bi-makānihī marābi‘ al-karam wa-maġāmi‘ al-ni‘am—uḥibbu an aḥtāra la-hū mimmā šannaftu min nukat al-aḥbār.” *Now our master—may God grant him at his station spring abodes of generosity and junctions of blessings—wanted that I choose for him from that which I have compiled from the wisecracks among stories* (1: 7). For the assumption that *Nukat al-aḥbār* is a lost compilation, compare: Thomas, “Concept of *Muḥāḍara*”: 159 note 17. The *Muḥāḍarāt*'s introduction does not contain any other allusion to a historical person or a specific social context and thus the oblique reference appears as a topos. Compare also the four dedication phrases without an identified patron, which were gleaned from other works ascribed to Rāḡib: Sārīsī, *Al-Rāḡib al-Isfahānī*: 36.

32. For the premodern Arab-Islamic topoi of introductions, see: Freimark, “Muḥaddima”: 495; compare: Serikoff, “*Taḥmīds*.”

33. For the thesis that Rāḡib consciously veiled his patron, see: Flügel, *Handschriften*: “ein Haupt- und Musterwerk dieser Gattung, welches der Verfasser auf das Verlangen seines Sajjid, den er nicht nennt, ... verfasste.” (1: 341 s.v. 369). For the interpretation that Rāḡib's reticence was an expression of modesty, compare: Madelung, “Ar-Rāḡib al-Isfahānī”: 156.

miscellany of two works: the Arabic *Muḥāḍarāt* and the Persian mirror for princes *Tuhfat al-mulūk* (Gift of Kings).³⁴ The conventions of introduction and colophon are stripped down to their absolute minimum: the formulae *basmala* and *tamma* as well as very short passages in the praise of God, i.e., *ḥamdala*.³⁵ The person who compiled this miscellany through excerpting the two works seems to have produced a copy, solely for personal use, because the visual means of page layout—such as different scripts and rubrication or overlining—that customarily organize the diverse contents in the other manuscripts are conspicuously absent from this copy.³⁶

II. b. Imprints and critical editions

The *Muḥāḍarāt* has been in print since the nineteenth century in both the Middle East and

34. Leiden, University Library – Legatum Warnerianum, MS arab. Or. 178 (1). A *terminus ad quem* is given through the manuscript's provenance because Jacob Gool (1596–1667) acquired this copy in commission for Leiden University: Voorhoeve, *Handlist*: XV, XVII and 224. Unfortunately, Leiden's catalogues do not record where Gool, who had worked in Morocco, as well as in Istanbul and Aleppo, purchased the manuscript: Schmidt, *Catalogue*: 1.

35. Leiden, University Library – Legatum Warnerianum, MS arab. Or. 178 (1): “Bi-sm Allāh al-raḥmān al-raḥīm. min Allāh astaʿīnu fī kull amr. fa-inna Allāh li-l-dāʾi naḡīb.” *In the name of God the merciful the compassionate. I ask God for help with everything. God is noble for a reason.* (fol.1v); “wa-l-ḥamd -li-llāh rabb al-ʿālamain. tamma.” *Praise be to God, the Lord of both worlds. (The book) has come to an end.* (fol.159r). The transition from the *ḥamdala* to the work's subject matter—this transition is usually introduced with *ammā baʿdu*, and the like—is not marked at all. For a short survey of formulae in the colophon, compare: Déroche, *Manuel*: 339–341.

36. For another manuscript without chapter headings, see: Istanbul, Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS arab. Fazıl Ahmet Paşa 1380; compare: Şeşen, *Catalogue*, 2: 102 s.v. 1380. For a manuscript that the scribe explicitly identifies as a personal copy (*li-naḥsi-hi*), see: Istanbul, Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS arab. Fazıl Ahmet Paşa 1379; compare: Şeşen, *Catalogue*, 2: 102 s.v. 1379. For the practice of studying a text through copying it as a whole or in excerpts, see: Messick, *Calligraphic State*: 90 and 116–118. That in sixteenth-century England university students copied by hand the texts which they could not afford to buy as printed books is discussed by David N. Bell in Hellinga and Trapp, *History of the Book*: 210, 220–221, and 233–234; for the very different situation in the fifteenth century with regard to the need for textbooks, compare in the same volume the observations by Elisabeth Leedham-Green: 330–331 and 334. But manuscripts, primarily written for personal use, could also be rough drafts or lecture notes; for rough drafts, see: Gacek, *Arabic Manuscript Tradition*: 73 s.v. sawād; and Ayman Fuʿād Sayyid in Dutton, *Codicology*: 93–101; for lecture notes, see: Schoeler, “Kitāb al-ʿAin”: 27–28; and compare: Kristian Jensen in Hellinga and Trapp, *History of the Book*: 355.

Europe. In the Middle East, commercial printing only spread in the nineteenth century, whereas the rise of Oriental studies, which accompanied in Europe the establishment of *Vergleichende Sprachwissenschaft* as an independent academic discipline, led at the beginning of the nineteenth century to a dramatic increase of scholarly editions of texts in Oriental languages. A total of eight different editions, published between 1829 and 1999, are documented in catalogues and quoted in scholarship whenever the *Muḥāḍarāt* is mentioned. But the available data do not allow conclusions about the numbers of books actually printed. Research in the fields of printing history and historical bibliography for Middle-Eastern and North-African societies in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as well as research on the history of European imprints in Oriental languages, is still in its infancy.³⁷ Consequently, the conventions through which presses distinguished a successive printing from a new edition, as well as the criteria of differently priced copies, remain yet to be studied, and so cannot yield conclusive data for the issue at hand.

Table 3. Imprints of the *Muḥāḍarāt*.

Critical edition of the incomplete Arabic text accompanied with a translation

1829 Vienna, ed. Gustav Flügel

The complete Arabic text

1870 n.p., ed. Muḥammad al-Samalūṭī

1908 Cairo, ed. Ibrāhīm b. Ḥasan al-Faiyūmī

1961 Beirut

1999 Beirut, ed. ʿUmar al-Tabbāʿ

37. Albin, "Arabic Printing": 114; and Geoffrey Roper in Atiyeh, *Book*: 224. For a summary of the history of printed books in Egypt, see: George N. Atiyeh in Atiyeh, *Book*: 243–249. There is also no specialized bibliography of European imprints in Arabic, Persian, or Ottoman, providing detailed publication information; emails by Joel B. Silver, Curator of Books at the Lilly Library, Bloomington, Indiana, 10 and 11 August 2004.

Arabic abridgments

1902 Cairo, ed. Ibrāhīm Zaidān

1960 Cairo, ed. Anwar al-Ğundī

Critical edition of the abridged Persian translation

1993 Tehran, ed. Aḥmad Muğāhid

In the Middle East, the first imprint of Rāġib's anthology appeared in Egypt during the rule of Ismā'īl (1863–1879), which was characterized by an expansion of book publishing in the private sector.³⁸ The complete text of the *Muḥāḍarāt* was published in two volumes on behalf of the *Ġam'īyat al-ma'ārif al-miṣrīya* (Egyptian Society of Education) at the end of July 1870.³⁹ Founded in 1868, the *Ġam'īyat al-ma'ārif al-miṣrīya* was a learned society that played a significant role in the publication of important works of medieval Arabic literature.⁴⁰ In accordance with this revivalist agenda, the edition represents visually a continuation of the Islamic manuscript tradition in print.⁴¹ In accordance with the Ottoman conventions, each volume has a discrete table of contents—*fihrist*—that precedes the title page and is separately paginated.⁴² Both volumes are paginated with Arabic numerals, to which the printer also added the customary catchword—*raqqāṣ*—on the left corner of each folio verso, even though the

38. Rāġib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ed. Samalūṭī.

39. Rāġib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ed. Samalūṭī, 1: 450, and 2: 428.

40. Brugman, *Introduction*: 27.

41. Endress, "Handschriftenkunde": 295–296.

42. Rāġib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ed. Samalūṭī, 1: ii–iv, and 2: ii–iv. For the term *fihrist*, see: Gacek, *Arabic Manuscript Tradition*: 111 s.v. *fihris*, *fihrist*. These two separate tables of contents appear as superfluous because a survey of all twenty-five chapters and their sections concludes the introduction: Rāġib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ed. Samalūṭī, 1: 3–5.

pagination renders catchwords superfluous. Both catchwords and pagination are devices for insuring that pages and quires will be bound in order.⁴³ Although the use of catchwords predates the use of foliation or pagination, as early as the seventeenth century there appeared Ottoman manuscripts in which texts were organized through both catchwords and pagination.⁴⁴ The two title pages of the first *Muḥāḍarāt* imprint do not name the editor, printing house, or date of publication, but both volumes end with colophons that contain these data.⁴⁵ Nor does title page and colophon identify the place of publication.⁴⁶ Illuminated headpieces, framed chapter headings and frames of the text block follow the aesthetics of manuscript pages.⁴⁷ Furthermore, the *Muḥāḍarāt* is combined with the *Ḍail ṭamarāt al-aurāq fī al-muḥāḍarāt* (Supplement to the Fruits of the Pages about Conversations) by Abū Bakr b. ʿAlī b. Ḥiğğa al-Ḥamawī (1366–1434).⁴⁸ The presentation of a supplement to another work on the margins is also a traditional practice of organizing texts in Islamic manuscripts.

43. For the term *raqqāṣ*, see: Gacek, *Arabic Manuscript Tradition*: 57 s.v. *raqqāṣ*.

44. As an example of a North-African Ottoman manuscript that contains both a preceding, paginated table of contents, which has replaced the traditional survey of contents in the introduction, and a continuous pagination, which is added to the traditional catchwords, see the seventeenth-century abridgment of Buḥārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ*: Bloomington, Indiana, Lilly Library, MS arab. Allen 16.

45. Rāḡib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ed. Samalūṭī, 1: 1 and 449–450, and 2: 1 and 428.

46. Rāḡib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ed. Samalūṭī, 1: 450, and 2: 428. The place of publication could be Alexandria, Būlāq or Cairo. The edition was printed by Ibrāhīm al-Muwailiḥī (died 1906), the father of the important neo-classical author Muḥammad al-Muwailiḥī (1858–1930); see: Brugman, *Introduction*: 69. Ibrāhīm al-Muwailiḥī was a journalist as well as a publisher, and in 1869, shortly before the publication of the *Muḥāḍarāt*, he established the weekly newspaper *Nuzhat al-afkār* (Entertainment of Thoughts).

47. For the illuminated headpieces, see: Rāḡib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ed. Samalūṭī, 1: 2, and 2: 2.

48. GAL 2: 16, and GAL S 2: 8–9.

In the first decade of the twentieth century, two editions of the *Muḥāḍarāt* were issued in Cairo. The complete text of the anthology was published in 1908.⁴⁹ This two-volume edition represents a transitional stage between manuscript and print. On the one hand, the preceding table of contents, page layout and colophons belong to the Ottoman manuscript tradition.⁵⁰ On the other hand, the catchwords have disappeared and only the pagination has remained. Moreover, the two title pages name the printing house and booksellers.⁵¹ Aside from a bookseller close to the Azhar, the honorifics and titles of the men who collaborated on this edition—the editor Ibrāhīm b. al-Šaiḥ Ḥasan al-Faiyūmī, the publisher Ḥaḍrat al-Saiyid Ḥusain Efendi Šaraf and the bookseller Ḥaḍrat al-Šaiḥ Saiyid Mūsā Šarīf—suggest that this edition was prepared by Muslim modernists, whose publishing efforts aimed at the preservation of so-called classical Arabic, understood as the Arabic of the Koran.⁵² According to Brockelmann, the editions of 1870 and 1908 were issued in three impressions. The 1870 edition was also printed in 1867 and 1888, while the 1908 edition was previously printed in 1893 and 1906.⁵³ Unfortunately, there is

49. Rāḡib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ed. Faiyūmī.

50. Rāḡib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ed. Faiyūmī, 1: i–ii, and 2: i–ii (tables of contents); and 1: 347, and 2: 325 (colophons).

51. Rāḡib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ed. Faiyūmī, 1: 1, and 2: 1. For this edition, the printer was not also the bookseller. The printing house—*al-Maṭbaʿa al-ʿāmirā al-šarafīya*—was under the direction of Ḥaḍrat al-Saiyid Ḥusain Efendi Šaraf, while the work was sold in the bookstore of Ḥaḍrat al-Šaiḥ Saiyid Mūsā Šarīf as well as in a shop close to the Azhar.

52. Brugman, *Introduction*: 27.

53. Brockelmann, “al-Rāḡib al-Iṣfahānī”: 1186; Rāḡib, *Nawādir*: xvii; compare: Sārīsī, *Al-Rāḡib al-Iṣfahānī*: 87 note 6 and 288. Although neither Brockelmann nor Muḡāhid give any further reference to support this information, both claim that Samalūṭī’s edition was first printed in 1867. In contrast, Sārīsī does not distinguish between new editions and reprints, and even supplies for each date of publication the name of another publisher, while he only quotes from the 1961 edition, and does not include the six early imprints in his bibliography. For 1870 as the year of publication of Samalūṭī’s edition, compare: Gildemeister, “Ettseālibī”: 171.

no evidence to confirm Brockelmann's data because the colophons of available copies give only 1870 and 1908 as years of publication.⁵⁴ In addition to these two imprints of the full text, a slim one-volume extract of the first thirteen chapters was published in 1902.⁵⁵ Rāḡib's introduction is visibly separated from the following text and marked with its own heading: "Muqaddimat al-mu'allif."⁵⁶ The table of contents now follows the text, as is customary in French books.⁵⁷ This edition was published by the bookstore *Maktabat al-hilāl*, which had been founded by the Greek-Orthodox Lebanese author Ğurġī (Georges) Zaidān (1861–1914) in 1894.⁵⁸ Therefore, the title page gives the year of publication only according to the Christian calendar.⁵⁹ The rationale of layout and organization is to present the purged and shortened anthology in a packaging that has the feel of books printed in contemporary France.⁶⁰ The volume ends with a full-page price-list of another seventeen books—dictionaries, textbooks for the learners of Arabic, and collections of

54. Rāḡib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ed. Samalūṭī: "wa-kāna tamāmu-hū fī awā'il Ğumādā ūlā sanat 1287" *Its completion was at the beginning of Ğumādā ūlā in the hiġra year 1287* [i.e., the end of July 1870 CE] (2: 428); and Rāḡib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ed. Faiyūmī: "wa-qad kāna al-tamāmu awā'il Raġab al-ḥarām 'ām 1326 min hiġratin" *The completion was at the beginning of Raġab al-ḥarām in the year 1326 after the hiġra* [i.e., the end of July 1908 CE] (2: 325).

55. Rāḡib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ed. Zaidān. The abridgment counts only twelve chapters, because Zaidān completely deleted the tenth chapter about foods and ended the anthology with the chapter about love, which is usually the thirteenth chapter.

56. Rāḡib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ed. Zaidān: 2–3.

57. Rāḡib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ed. Zaidān: 303–304.

58. George N. Atiyeh in Atiyeh, *Book*: 247; see also p.246 for the practice that in Egyptian publishing since the 1870s the bookstores were also the publishers. For Ğurġī (Georges) Zaidān, see: Brugman, *Introduction*: 218–224.

59. Rāḡib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ed. Zaidān: 1. Already in the 1880s books printed in Egypt could show both the Muslim and Christian year on the title page. See, for example, the four volumes of 'Alī Mubārak's *ʿAlām al-Dīn* that bear on the four title pages the *hiġra* year 1299 as well as 1881 CE.

60. Rāḡib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ed. Zaidān: "Haḍaba-hū wa-ḥtaṣara-hū Ibrahīm Zaidān" (1).

Arabic poetry and literature—also available from the *Maktabat al-hilāl*.⁶¹ This abridgment of the *Muḥāḍarāt* has stayed in print throughout the twentieth century.⁶²

A new edition of the complete *Muḥāḍarāt* was published 1961 in Beirut.⁶³ This imprint in four volumes presented the anthology in a modern edition. Consequently, the edition has been repeatedly reprinted in Egypt and Lebanon, and its version of Rāḡib's anthology has become the edition that is commonly cited in scholarship,⁶⁴ although the Lebanese publishing house *Dār maktabat al-ḥayāt* does not identify sources or editors in the short preface to the first volume.⁶⁵ Moreover, the impression of an up-to-date, and allegedly more reliable, edition is the result of a modern layout, and thus is technically just an optical illusion. An annotation that appears in unchanged form in the three editions of 1870, 1908, and 1961 suggests that the 1870 edition was actually the basis for the later editions of the anthology's complete text.⁶⁶ Shortly before the Beirut reprint of

61. In the advertisement the editor Ibrāhīm Zaidān refers only to the bookstore and stresses its good services: “wa-ladai-hā [i.e., maktaba] qā’ima bi-asmā’ al-kutub tursilu maḡḡānan li-man yaṭlubu-hā min mudīr al-maktaba” *It has a catalogue that informs about book titles, free of charge for whomever demands it from the bookseller* (Rāḡib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ed. Zaidān: 305).

62. See, for example, just the editions listed in OCLC: Beirut: Dār al-āṭār, 1980 (OCLC record 22884870); and Beirut: Dār al-ḡīl, 1986 (OCLC record 22392069).

63. Rāḡib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ed. Beirut.

64. See, for example: Sārīsī, *Al-Rāḡib al-Isfahānī*, Marzolph, *Arabia ridens*; and Thomas, “Concept of *Muḥāḍara*”: 156. For the opinion that this is the best edition of the *Muḥāḍarāt*, see: Rāḡib, *Nawādir*: xvii s.v. 8.

65. Rāḡib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ed. Beirut, 1: 5; the preface is precisely titled: “Kalimat al-nāṣir.” In contrast, in the three Egyptian imprints, the editors were identified: Muḥammad al-Samalūṭī prepared the 1870 edition (Rāḡib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ed. Samalūṭī, 1: 450), Ibrāhīm Zaidān the 1902 abridgment (Rāḡib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ed. Zaidān: 1), and Ibrāhīm b. al-Ṣaiḥ Ḥasan al-Faiyūmī the 1908 edition (Rāḡib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ed. Faiyūmī, 2: 325).

66. This annotation concerns an anecdote about how sultans informed their boon companions that they had to leave. The anecdote contains a number of Persian expressions that Muḥammad ‘Ārif, *wakīl* of the *Ġum‘īyat al-ma‘ārif* translated in the 1870 edition: “qāla-hū Muḥammad ‘Ārif wakīl Ġam‘īyat al-ma‘ārif” (Rāḡib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ed. Samalūṭī, 1: 121). Muḥammad ‘Ārif’s note appears completely unchanged in the later editions: Rāḡib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ed. Faiyūmī, 1: 94; and Rāḡib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ed. Beirut, 1: 192. Regarding

the complete work, a new abridgment by Anwar al-Ġundī appeared in Cairo. This rare version of the *Muḥāḍarāt* is not listed in any western bibliography or database and only Sārīsī referred to it.⁶⁷ In 1999, the most recent edition of the *Muḥāḍarāt* was published in Beirut. Its editor, ‘Umar al-Tabbā‘, presents the text of the 1908 edition with annotations, but he did not consult any manuscripts and does not identify the sources used in his explanatory footnotes.⁶⁸ These observations indicate that twentieth-century editors and their publishing houses regarded the two early printed editions of Rāḡib’s anthology as authoritative versions. Printing appeared as the superior technique for the copying of manuscripts, and so the oldest available imprint became the source of newer ones.⁶⁹ Such attitudes toward imprints and manuscripts, especially as long as printing and copying by hand were still fiercely competing with each other,⁷⁰ are not a phenomenon limited to Islamic manuscript culture. Among fifteenth-century English printed books, imprints could attain the status of standard editions and then superseded the preceding, older manuscript tradition.⁷¹ This leads to the question of which manuscripts the editors had used for their editions—despite the separate problem of actually finding a *Muḥāḍarāt* manuscript in Egypt .

further evidence for the dependency between the three imprints, see below, chapter III, note 94.

67. *Al-Muḥṭār min kitāb muḥāḍarāt al-udabā’ li-l-Rāḡib*, ed. Anwar al-Ġundī, Cairo: Wizārat al-ṭaqāfa al-miṣrīya, 1960 (Sārīsī, *Al-Rāḡib al-Isfahānī*: 198 note 1, and 292). I was unable to obtain a copy of this abridgment, since there is no record for this edition in a western database.

68. Rāḡib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ed. Tabbā‘, 1: 12.

69. For an example of producing an ‘improved’ version of a work through textual criticism of its previous imprints, with no consideration whatsoever of its extant manuscripts, see the printing history of Ibn Ḥazm’s *Tauq al-ḥamāma*: Witkam, “Stemma”: 90–91; compare: Muhsin Mahdi in Atiyeh, *Book*: 11 and 15 note 7.

70. For a survey of this transitional epoch, see: Muhsin Mahdi in Atiyeh, *Book*: 1–15.

71. Lotte Hellenga in Hellenga and Trapp, *History of the Book*: 91.

The *Muḥāḍarāt* is currently available in three different Arabic editions—the editions of 1961 and 1999 and the 1902 abridgment—in the Middle East, though none is a critical edition.⁷² The variety of non-academic imprints indicates that since the 1870s there has been sufficient demand from a general audience to keep the work in print. Conversely, the two critical editions of Rāḡib’s anthology were printed outside the Arab lands. In 1829, Gustav Flügel (1802–1870) published the *Muḥtaṣarāt min kitāb mu’nis al-waḥīd fī al-muḥāḍarāt* (Excerpts from the Book of the Companion to the Man Alone in Conversations).⁷³ The text presents a critical edition of a *Muḥāḍarāt* fragment in Vienna’s National Library, accompanied with a German translation.⁷⁴ Although Flügel knew the *Muḥāḍarāt*, he did not recognize the edited text as a fragment of Rāḡib’s anthology and instead identified Abū Maṣṣūr ‘Abd al-Malik al-Ta‘ālibī (961–1038) as its

72. In this context ‘critical editing’ only implies that an editor produces a copy of a text, aiming at constructing an author’s original work through examining the available sources. For a consideration of the different approaches to critical editing in general, see: G. Thomas Tanselle in Greetham, *Scholarly Editing*: 9–32. For a surprisingly sanguine description of the state of affairs in the field of Arabic studies, compare: M.G. Carter in Greetham, *Scholarly Editing*: 546–574.

73. Ta‘ālibī, *Muḥtaṣarāt*.

74. Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, MS arab. Mixt. 37; Flügel, *Handschriften*, 1: 332 s.v. 360; compare: Ta‘ālibī, *Muḥtaṣarāt*: XXVIII–XXIX; and Duda, *Islamische Handschriften*, 1: 291. For a review of Flügel’s edition, see: Ewald, Review of *Muḥtaṣarāt*.

author.⁷⁵ Flügel's edition was the first European imprint of an Arabic anthology.⁷⁶ It belonged to the nineteenth-century enterprise in which European scholars published basic texts for the study of Arabic literature in western Europe.⁷⁷ Nonetheless, Flügel's edition was never reprinted. The other critical edition was prepared by Aḥmad Muğāhid and presents the text of Qazwīnī's abridged Persian translation of the *Muḥāḍarāt*.⁷⁸ This Persian abridgment was published 1993 in Tehran under the title *Nawādir* (Rarities).

II. c. The *Muḥāḍarāt* between Tehran and Istanbul

Dated manuscripts and imprints of the *Muḥāḍarāt* indicate that the anthology has been in

75. Joseph von Hammer purchased the manuscript in Istanbul: Ṭaʿālibī, *Muḥtaṣarāt*: V–VI and XXVIII. Ironically, Hammer did not recognize that the fragment belonged to the *Muḥāḍarāt*, though he knew Rāḡib's work (VII). Flügel even used the *Muḥāḍarāt*'s contents to argue that Ṭaʿālibī's work represents a similar type of anthology (XII–XIII note 4). For the correct identification of contents and author, see: Gildemeister, "Ettseālibī," compare: GAL 1: 340 s.v. 29. Flügel's mistake caused some confusion about a fragment in the Bibliothèque nationale—MS arab. 3304—that is ascribed to Ṭaʿālibī: Slane, *Catalogue*: 578–579 s.v. 3304; Vajda, *Index général*: 453 s.v. *Muḥāḍarāt*; and Vajda, "Une anthologie": 212. Flügel, however, had already mentioned that the two manuscripts were not related: Ṭaʿālibī, *Muḥtaṣarāt*: XXVIII.

76. Hammer wrote the preface to this edition, in which he described available editions and translations of the compilations of Arabic literature and poetry. Hammer distinguishes between chrestomathies, compiled by European Arabists, and original Arabic compilations, such as the text of this edition: "An arabischen Anthologien hat es in Europa im letzten Jahrzehnte Gottlob! nicht gefehlt; zwischen der arabischen... Chrestomathie des Freyh. Silvestre de Sacy... und zwischen der jüngsten arabischen Anthologie Hr. Prof. Kosegarten's stehen die französischen und deutschen Professoren, die der Hr. Humbert, Grangeret de la Grange, Rosenmüller und Oberleitner mitten in. ... Die genannten Anthologien sowohl als die früheren sind alle das Werk europäischer Auswahl und keine derselben ist in solcher Ordnung von einem Morgenländer ausgewählt oder zusammengestellt worden. Überhaupt hat man bisher in Europa von dem Geist und Wesen arabischer Blütenlesen nur wenige Kunde gehabt, indem man außer der poetischen, der Hamasa (deren Herausgabe Hr. Prof. Freytag so eben glücklich vollendet hat), von den prosaischen im Geiste der des Stobaeus nach Materien geordneten bisher sehr wenig gewußt." (Ṭaʿālibī, *Muḥtaṣarāt*: II–III).

77. Ṭaʿālibī, *Muḥtaṣarāt*.

In the OCLC record 31050510, there are eight copies listed in North America and two copies in Britain. Even though books like this scholarly edition tend to have a higher survival rate, they do not only survive in libraries. Still, it is unlikely that the edition size was larger than a couple of hundred copies. For these considerations about Flügel's edition I am very much indebted to Joel B. Silver, Curator of Books at the Lilly Library, Bloomington, Indiana, emails from 10 August 2004.

78. Rāḡib, *Nawādir*.

circulation, if not always in use as a textbook of literary Arabic, since the first half of the twelfth century. But it is impossible to construe a *stemma* because the available data for the transmission of the *Muḥāḍarāt* are fragmentary. The interpretation of the available data hinges on how they are contextualized within the socioeconomic conditions and intellectual frameworks of different Islamic societies, from pre-Mongol Iran and the Ottoman empire to contemporary Egypt. Unfortunately, there is still little research about manuscript workshops, book trade and the formation of private and public collections, as well as the changes initiated by the large-scale introduction of printing in the nineteenth century.⁷⁹ Only a blurred outline of the *Muḥāḍarāt*'s circulation can be gleaned from those data.

Among the dated manuscripts of the *Muḥāḍarāt* there is the peculiar absence of dated manuscripts that originated between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries. Whereas the thirteenth-century gap can be explained with the political instabilities and economic problems that were caused by the Mongol conquest, the end of the Abbasid caliphate, and the expansion of the Seljuq sultanate into Anatolia, the fifteenth-century and sixteenth-century gaps can be filled with some of the undated manuscripts that are approximately dated as fifteenth-century copies.⁸⁰

79. For research on the book in Islamic societies up to 1990, see Michael W. Albin's selective bibliography in Atiyeh, *Book*: 273–281; and for research on the Arabic manuscript tradition up to 2000, see: Gacek, *Arabic Manuscript Tradition*: 179–269.

80. In the catalogues, the following three manuscripts are approximately dated in the fifteenth century: Berlin, Staatsbibliothek – Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung, MS arab. We. II 423; Berlin, Staatsbibliothek – Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung, MS arab. Spr. 1218; and Istanbul, Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS arab. Fazıl Ahmet Paşa 1376.

Table 4. Dated manuscripts and imprints of the *Muḥāḍarāt*.

- 1129 London, British Library, MS arab. Add. 18,529.
 1183 Istanbul, Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS arab. Fazıl Ahmet Paşa 1378.
 1200 Berlin, Staatsbibliothek – Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung, MS arab. We. II 1175.

GAP OF MORE THAN A HUNDRED YEARS

- 1388 Istanbul, Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS arab. Fazıl Ahmet Paşa 1380.
 1391 Istanbul, Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS arab. Fazıl Ahmet Paşa 1371 (1).
 1398 Istanbul, Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS arab. Fazıl Ahmet Paşa 1379.

GAP OF MORE THAN A HUNDRED YEARS

- 1510 Istanbul, Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS arab. Fazıl Ahmet Paşa 1375.

GAP OF MORE THAN A HUNDRED YEARS

- 1627 Cairo, Dār al-kutub al-miṣrīya, MS arab. ādāb muḥtaṣar 97.
 1639 Berlin, Staatsbibliothek – Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung, MS arab. We. II 424.
 1658 Tehran, Kitābhāne-yi markazī-yi Dānišgāh-i Tihṛān, MS arab. 1884.
 1660 Tehran, Kitābhāne-yi Madrase-yi ‘Alī-yi Muṭaḥḥarī, MS arab. 3265.
 1703 Meshed, Kitābhāne-yi markazī-yi Āstān-i quds-i raḍawī, MS arab. 4403.
 1712 Cairo, Dār al-kutub al-miṣrīya, MS arab. ādāb 276.
 1754 London, British Library, MS arab. Add. 7305.
 1829 Vienna, ed. Gustav Flügel
 1834 Meshed, Kitābhāne-yi markazī-yi Āstān-i quds-i raḍawī, MS arab. 4990.
 1855 Cairo, Dār al-kutub al-miṣrīya, MS arab. ādāb 275.
 1860 Tabriz, Kitābhāne-yi millī, MS arab. 2559.
 1868 Tehran, Kitābhāne-yi ‘umūmī-yi ma‘ārif, MS arab. adabīyāt 144.
 1870 ed. Muḥammad al-Samalūṭī
 1902 Cairo, ed. Ibrāhīm Zaidān
 1908 Cairo, ed. Ibrāhīm b. Ḥasan al-Faiyūmī
 1960 Cairo, ed. Anwar al-Ğundī
 1961 Beirut
 1993 Tehran, ed. Aḥmad Muğāhid
 1999 Beirut, ed. ‘Umar al-Ṭabbā‘

The humble character of the examined Arabic manuscripts suggests that the *Muḥāḍarāt* was considered a practical textbook rather than a literary work suited to become a decorative coffee-table book. The most famous example of such a literary work is the eleventh-century *Šāhnāme* (Book of Kings) by Abū al-Qāsim al-Firdausī (died 1020 or 1025), which, since the fourteenth century, was produced in very expensively illuminated and illustrated manuscripts, like the famous codex commissioned by the Safavid shah Ṭahmāsb (ruled 1524–1576).⁸¹ Only valuable manuscripts were repaired or recycled, so that the small number of preserved *Muḥāḍarāt* manuscripts copied before 1639 does not allow conclusions about the work's circulation and popularity in the preceding centuries.⁸² Numerous identified abridgments document that Rāḡib's anthology was so well-known that even shortened versions compiled by readers just for their own libraries were transmitted and preserved. The *Muḥāḍarāt* excerpts in the undated miscellany in Leiden are an example of this reception phenomenon.⁸³ Otherwise, the printed Arabic abridgment from 1902⁸⁴ represents the continuation of the already well-established abridgment practice. Among the thirty-two Arabic manuscripts in Middle-Eastern libraries, four abridgments are held in collections in Cairo, Damascus, Istanbul and Meshed. The manuscripts in Damascus and Istanbul are undated,⁸⁵ while the

81. For Firdausī's date of death, see: Khaleghi-Motlagh, "Ferdowsī": 513 and 517. For Ṭahmāsb's *Šāhnāme* codex, see: Grabar, *Miniatures*: 67 and figs. 32 and 33; compare: Quinn, *Historical Writing*: 25.

82. With regard to the repair of damaged manuscripts, see: Déroche, *Manuel*: 16, 76, 188, 212, and 215.

83. Leiden, University Library – Legatum Warnerianum, MS arab. Or. 178 (1).

84. Rāḡib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ed. Zaidān.

85. Damascus, Dār al-kutub al-zāhirīya, MS arab. adabīyāt °Abd Allāh Bey; and Istanbul, Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS arab. Fazıl Ahmet Paşa 1374.

Cairo manuscript is dated 1627 and the Meshed one 1834.⁸⁶ Unfortunately, the catalogues do not indicate whether those manuscripts preserve *Muḥāḍarāt* versions compiled for personal use or for sale. This information is also lacking for the three manuscripts that contain Qazwīnī's abridged Persian translation from the seventeenth century.⁸⁷ Neither the complete abridgment nor its two fragments have an introduction, be it by Rāḡib or by his Persian translator Qazwīnī.⁸⁸ Seen against the background of many well-established forms of private and official patronage, it is salient that Muḡāhid did not mention whether the manuscripts nonetheless bear any reference, such as a panegyric, to an identified patron.

The current location of the thirty-two *Muḥāḍarāt* manuscripts in collections outside western Europe, as well as the places where the work was published in the nineteenth century, provide indirect information about the Islamic societies in which the anthology was available to readers and book collectors. The exact value of these data for the spread of the *Muḥāḍarāt* throughout the *umma* is nevertheless limited because Muslims traveled across the political boundaries between Islamic societies to perform the *ḥaḡḡ* and to further their education through *ṭalab al-ʿilm*, in addition to the involvement of many people in the trade of commodities between Asia, Africa, and Europe. The mobility of both people and goods included scribes, who traveled in the search of training

86. Cairo, Dār al-kutub al-miṣrīya, MS arab. ādāb muḥtaṣar 97; and Meshed, Kitābhāne-yi markazī-yi Āstān-i quds-i raḍawī, MS arab. 4990.

87. Tehran, Kitābhāne-yi Maḡlis-i šūrā-yi islāmī, MS pers. 308; Meshed, Kitābhāne-yi markazī-yi Āstān-i quds-i raḍawī, MS pers. 4306; and Tehran, Kitābhāne-yi markazī-yi Dāniṣgāh-i Tihrān, MS pers. 4503; compare: Rāḡib, *Nawādir*: xxv.

88. Rāḡib, *Nawādir*: alif note 1.

and better employment, as well as books, which were not only traded but also given away as presents, looted as spoils of war, or stolen by covetous readers and unscrupulous librarians.⁸⁹ The *Muḥāḍarāt* manuscript in Halle (Saale) documents the mobility of books.⁹⁰ The undated copy consists of two parts: a fourteenth- or fifteenth-century fragment from Mamluk Egypt (fol.1–204), and its eighteenth-century Ottoman continuation (fol.205–346). The codicological and palaeographical data indicate that a scribe trained in the Ottoman tradition of calligraphy analyzed the Mamluk fragment. While the Ottoman scribe used black ink on different European *tre-lune* laid papers to supplement a text written with brown ink on thick laid paper without chain lines,⁹¹ he changed neither the size of the text-block nor the number of lines per page.⁹² Moreover, the Ottoman scribe also followed his Mamluk predecessor by relying solely on differently sized scripts, especially the interplay between a *nash* without ligatures and a larger *tauqī*

89. For general observations about the theft of books, as well as for examples of notorious European book thieves, see: Manguel, *History of Reading*: 236–245; compare: David N. Bell in Hellinga and Trapp, *History of the Book*: 234. In Islamic societies, provisions against the theft of books can be observed in the wording of *waqf* statements that regulated the use of endowed books; see: Messick, *Calligraphic State*: 97–98 and 119–122.

90. Halle (Saale), Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Sachsen-Anhalt – Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft, MS arab. 116; compare: Wehr, *Verzeichnis*: 42 s.v. 116.

91. For the importance of chain lines, laid lines, and watermarks, such as *tre lune*, to identify paper produced in Islamic societies, see: Déroche, *Manuel*: 59–66. For the manufacture of paper in medieval Iraq and Syria, compare: Bloom, *Paper*: 47–61. Despite its wealth of information, Bloom does not discuss how to distinguish European from Islamic papers.

92. The dimension of the text-block stays *c.* 17.5 cm x *c.* 11 cm, as does the number of seventeen lines per page with *c.* 1 cm interlineal spacing; both parts of the manuscript show some traces of a ruling board (*mīstara*).

with ligatures to set off the headings of chapters, sections, and rubrics.⁹³ The overall result of the Ottoman scribe's efforts was a full copy of the *Muḥāḍarāt*'s last nine chapters, carefully produced, though rather inexpensive, because both parts were written on unglazed papers without expensive illumination or illustration.⁹⁴ The *Muḥāḍarāt* manuscript thus offers insight into how in the Ottoman empire scribes recycled century-old fragments of Arabic literature into contemporary trade books. Finally, the circumstances under which between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries the twelve Arabic manuscripts of the *Muḥāḍarāt* became the property of west-European libraries—that is, answers to questions of provenance, such as who sold the manuscripts to the European libraries and why and for how much money were they acquired—are mostly beyond construction. The lack of information about the copies' provenance reflects to some degree that none of these unremarkable manuscripts is considered outstanding,⁹⁵ though another reason could also be the loss of administrative paperwork

93. For the aesthetics of combining different styles of script on one page, an invention that is attributed to Yāqūt al-Mustaʿsim (died 1299), and its importance for Ottoman calligraphy, see: Stanley, *Qurʾān*: 27–30, 39 item 27 (b/w reproduction), and 82–83 item 27 (color reproduction). Compare Mohamed Zakariya's modern examples of combining differently sized scripts in: Safwat, *Art of the Pen*: 234.

94. The assumption of care taken by the Ottoman calligrapher is supported by the observation that in the Ottoman continuation all quires are quaternia, folded in the same way so that the chain lines are always running vertically. The same care is documented by the selected European papers because at least three different watermarks are visible, yet the papers are very similar with regard to thinness, color, and appearance.

95. With regard to three manuscripts in Leiden and Vienna that were acquired through the influential European scholars Jacob Gool and Hammer, the catalogues do not make this connection explicit. For Jacob Gool, see: Leiden, University Library – Legatum Warnerianum, MS arab. Or. 178; compare: De Goeje and Houtsma, *Catalogus codicum Arabicorum*: 276–277 s.v. CCCCLXIV; and Voorhoeve, *Handlist*: XV, XVII and 224. For Hammer, see: Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, MS arab. Mixt. 37; compare: Taʿālibī, *Muḥtaṣarāt*: V–VI; Flügel, *Handschriften*, 1: 332 s.v. 360; and Duda, *Islamische Handschriften*, 1: 291; as well as Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, MS arab. A.F. 144–145; compare: Taʿālibī, *Muḥtaṣarāt*: XII note 4; Flügel, *Handschriften*, 1: 343 s.v. 370; and Duda, *Islamische Handschriften*, 1: 283.

because of the massive destruction of European cities during World War II. That between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries these manuscripts were added to collections of Oriental manuscripts proves that in Islamic societies copies of the *Muḥāḍarāt* were available for sale to European collectors.

Table 5. Manuscripts of the *Muḥāḍarāt* in collections in Turkey, Syria, Egypt, and Iran.

Seventeen Arabic manuscripts in Turkey

Istanbul, Hacı Selim Ağa Kütüphanesi, MS arab. 987.
 Istanbul, Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS arab. Fazıl Ahmet Paşa 1371.
 Istanbul, Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS arab. Fazıl Ahmet Paşa 1372.
 Istanbul, Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS arab. Fazıl Ahmet Paşa 1373.
 Istanbul, Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS arab. Fazıl Ahmet Paşa 1374.
 Istanbul, Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS arab. Fazıl Ahmet Paşa 1375.
 Istanbul, Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS arab. Fazıl Ahmet Paşa 1376.
 Istanbul, Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS arab. Fazıl Ahmet Paşa 1377.
 Istanbul, Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS arab. Fazıl Ahmet Paşa 1378.
 Istanbul, Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS arab. Fazıl Ahmet Paşa 1379.
 Istanbul, Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS arab. Fazıl Ahmet Paşa 1380.
 Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS arab. Ayasofya 4254.
 Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS arab. Ayasofya 4255.
 Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS arab. Ayasofya 4256.
 Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS arab. Ayasofya 4257.
 Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS arab. Ayasofya 4258.
 Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, MS arab. Yeni Câmi 1004.

Four Arabic manuscripts in Syria

Damascus, Dār al-kutub al-ẓāhirīya, MS arab. adabīyāt Murādīya.
 Damascus, Dār al-kutub al-ẓāhirīya, MS arab. adabīyāt Ḥayyāṭīn 1.
 Damascus, Dār al-kutub al-ẓāhirīya, MS arab. adabīyāt Ḥayyāṭīn 2.
 Damascus, Dār al-kutub al-ẓāhirīya, MS arab. adabīyāt ʿAbd Allāh Bey.

Three Arabic manuscripts in Egypt

Cairo, Dār al-kutub al-miṣrīya, MS arab. ādāb 275.
 Cairo, Dār al-kutub al-miṣrīya, MS arab. ādāb 276.
 Cairo, Dār al-kutub al-miṣrīya, MS arab. MS arab. ādāb muḥtaṣar 97.

Three Persian and eight Arabic manuscripts in Iran

Meshed, Kitābhāne-yi markazī-yi Āstān-i quds-i raḍawī, MS arab. 4403.

Meshed, Kitābhāne-yi markazī-yi Āstān-i quds-i raḍawī, MS arab. 4990.

Meshed, Kitābhāne-yi markazī-yi Āstān-i quds-i raḍawī, MS pers. 4306.

Tabriz, Kitābhāne-yi millī, MS arab. 2559.

Tehran, Kitābhāne-yi Madrase-yi ‘Alī-yi Muṭahḥarī, MS arab. 3265.

Tehran, Kitābhāne-yi Maḡlis-i šūrā-yi islāmī, MS pers. 308.

Tehran, Kitābhāne-yi markazī-yi Dānišgāh-i Tihṛān, MS arab. 1884.

Tehran, Kitābhāne-yi markazī-yi Dānišgāh-i Tihṛān, MS arab. 2492.

Tehran, Kitābhāne-yi markazī-yi Dānišgāh-i Tihṛān, MS pers. 4503.

Tehran, Kitābhāne-yi ‘umūmī-yi ma‘ārif, MS arab. adabīyāt 144.

Yazd, Kitābhāne-yi Wazīrī, MS arab. 14,700.

Today, the largest holdings of *Muḥāḍarāt* manuscripts are kept in Turkey and Iran, the successor states of the Ottoman and Safavid empires. Three libraries in Istanbul hold together seventeen Arabic copies of the work, while eleven manuscripts of the Arabic text, or its Persian abridgment, are divided between seven Iranian libraries. In contrast, in Syria and Egypt, the Arab lands that had been provinces of the Ottoman empire, the national libraries in Damascus and Cairo together own a mere seven copies of the Arabic anthology. Yet the three Arabic imprints that appeared between 1870 and 1908, were published in Egypt. In the case of Egypt, the ratio between two available manuscripts and the publication of three different imprints before World War I might further explain the importance of the 1870 edition for the later imprints of the work. The National Library of Egypt had just been founded in 1870.⁹⁶ Unfortunately, the colophons of the 1870 edition do not provide any information about the manuscripts used for the imprint.⁹⁷

96. Brugman, *Introduction*: 66.

97. The editor indicated that he worked from complementary fragments whose origins he did not reveal: “baida anna nusaḥa-hū [i.e., ḡuz’] wa-in kaṭurat ‘an iṭnatain lā tazīdu ‘an wāḥida-hū” *Yet its manuscripts, even though they were more than two, did not amount to more than one of it* (Rāḡib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ed. Samalūṭī, 1: 450).

Even though Islamic societies are all characterized by the rule of Islamic elites, the actual circulation of works indicates the significance of regional differentiation within the enormous range of cultural expressions, understood as Islamic despite their various incompatibilities.⁹⁸ An evaluation of the *Muḥāḍarāt*'s circulation must therefore identify the regions of the *umma* in which Rāḡib's anthology was not known. To date there is no record of a copy of the *Muḥāḍarāt* in a North-African or Spanish collection, but the circulation of manuscripts and imprints outlines an axis between Iran and Turkey that crosses through the Arab lands. On the one hand, the complete seventeenth-century codex of the *Muḥāḍarāt* in Tehran is a manuscript whose scribes betray an Ottoman training in calligraphy and illumination and whose patron was an Ottoman judge.⁹⁹ On the other hand, the miscellany in Leiden¹⁰⁰ was written by a person who read Arabic as well as Persian. The compiler was familiar with *nasta'liq* because *nasta'liq* ligatures permeate his very informal *nash*. The *waqfs* of Köprülü Mehmet Paşa, Ahmed III and Nādir Šāh Afšār document that both Ottoman and Safavid dignitaries owned copies the *Muḥāḍarāt*. This observation is important because not every Arabic work that circulated in Iran and India was also available to Ottoman readers, as can be illustrated with the

98. With regard to the commonalities of Islamic societies, compare this definition of Islamic art: "the art produced for rulers or populations of Islamic culture. The works discussed did not always have a specifically religious purpose, sometimes far from it, and the patrons and artists were not invariably good Muslims, and occasionally not Muslims at all. It is for this reason that it is appropriate to speak of this art as Islamic, which admits of some latitude in definition, rather than as Muslim, which does not. However, the culture in which the works were produced was permeated with Muslim thought, and this, together with factors of geography and history, conditioned what was made." (Brend, *Islamic Art*: 10).

99. Tehran, Kitābhāne-yi markazī-yi Dānišgāh-i Tihirān, MS arab. 1884. For the patron's name, see above, note 30.

100. Leiden, University Library – Legatum Warnerianum, MS arab. Or. 178 .

works of Mullā Ṣadrā (1572–1641). Obtaining a copy of his *Kitāb al-asfār al-arbaʿa* (Book of the Four Journeys) in the Ottoman empire was most difficult in the seventeenth century, and even in the twentieth century the book was only rarely on sale outside India and Iran.¹⁰¹ The distribution of *Muḥāḍarāt* manuscripts suggests further that the work was more popular among the Ottomans than the Safavids. This impression is reinforced by the abridged Persian translation, which Qazwīnī produced in the second half of the seventeenth century and of which only three manuscripts are known today. Qazwīnī's Persian translation appears as a failed effort to increase the interest of his Safavid audience in an Arabic anthology that seemed distinguished enough to warrant a translation.¹⁰² In contrast, there is no evidence for an Ottoman translation of the work.

The different attitudes of Ottoman and Safavid readers toward a late-tenth or early eleventh-century Arabic anthology raise questions about language barriers within the *umma*. They suggest that Ottomans and Safavids had different perceptions of the role of Arabic within their societies because Ottoman and Persian were not equally efficient tools of communication outside their societies. For Safavids and Ottomans alike, Arabic was a very important second language because of its uncontested dominance in the fields of theology and law. Though Ottoman rule and administration brought the Ottoman language to the Balkans, North Africa and the central Arab lands, Persian functioned as

101. Muhsin Mahdi in Atiyeh, *Book*: 9 and 14 notes 4-5.

102. Although the available evidence supports this conclusion, it is important to remember that no introduction has been preserved in any of the three Persian manuscripts and that Muḡāhid's codicological description of these manuscripts is very basic: Rāḡib, *Nawādir*: xxv and alif note 1.

the *lingua franca* between the Mediterranean, the Black Sea and the Indian Ocean.¹⁰³

These regional disparities in the *Muḥāḍarāt*'s reception continued in the nineteenth century, when official printing presses were newly established in Egypt and the Qajar empire.¹⁰⁴ In the Ottoman empire, where Christians and Jews had been printing books since the sixteenth century, the High Porte only began to endorse the printing of books and newspaper on a larger scale at the beginning of the nineteenth century.¹⁰⁵ In the 1860s the Arabic text of the *Muḥāḍarāt* was still copied by hand in Qajar Iran,¹⁰⁶ while the work was prepared for its first imprint in Egypt.¹⁰⁷ Seen in connection with the rise of the Pan-Arabism, it is no longer surprising that a late-tenth or early-eleventh-century Arabic anthology was printed in Egypt, yet did not make the cut when Qajar and Ottoman publishers had to choose what to present to their regional audiences who otherwise had a greater chance of finding a *Muḥāḍarāt* manuscript.

II. d. Professional responses to the *Muḥāḍarāt*

As already mentioned, Rāḡib himself did not specify his audience in the *Muḥāḍarāt*'s introduction. Since the anthology is not mentioned in other works ascribed to Rāḡib,¹⁰⁸

103. Īraj Afshār in Cooper, *Significance*: 19–29.

104. “Maṭba‘a”: 797–798, 801–802, and 803–804.

105. “Maṭba‘a”: 799–803.

106. Tabriz, Kitābhāne-yi millī, MS arab. 2559; and Tehran, Kitābhāne-yi ‘umūmī-yi ma‘ārif, MS arab. adabīyāt 144.

107. Rāḡib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ed. Samalūṭī.

108. Madelung, “Ar-Rāḡib al-Iṣfahānī”: 157.

the audiences of those works cannot serve as the starting point of speculations about the *Muḥāḍarāt*'s users. Book trade and book ownership in premodern Islamic societies has also not been systematically researched. But references to the *Muḥāḍarāt* in biographical dictionaries¹⁰⁹ and book catalogues have preserved how over the centuries Rāḡib's colleagues judged as professional readers and classified the work. Although this evidence does not equally cover the thousand years of the *Muḥāḍarāt*'s reception or all Islamic societies between Iran, Central Asia and the Balkans, it does indicate shifts of focus that concurred with the course of Islamic history.¹¹⁰

109. For an objection against using *kitāb al-ṭabaqāt* or *kitāb al-tarāḡīm* as Arabic terms for the literary genre *biographical dictionary*, see: Wadād al-Qāḍī in Atiyeh, *Book*: "there is no equivalent for the term 'biographical dictionaries'... and more importantly, ... there are many genres of writing that come close to being identified as biographical dictionaries when they are, strictly speaking, not: one is to be reminded of the how closely biographical dictionaries have been associated with history for example. Thus, a biographical dictionary, as I would define it, is a prose work whose primary structure is that of a series of biographies, regardless of the order in which these biographies succeed each other." (94). Treating *kitāb al-ṭabaqāt* and *kitāb al-tarāḡīm* as semantic units, al-Qāḍī actually argues that which is missing in the Arabic vocabulary is the term for, and more importantly the concept of, *dictionary*. Only this implicit conceptual distinction allows her then to pit a prose narrative, understood as historiography, against a sequence of biographies, understood as dictionary, because even al-Qāḍī does not understand a work like Nīšāpūrī's *Salḡūqnāme*, a dynastic history of the Great Seljuqs organized as the successive reigns of their sultans, as *ṭabaqāt*, although the "biographies are... the determining factor" (96) in this chronicle. For a semantic comparison of the singular *ṭabaqa* with the terms *ḡins* and *ṣinf*, see: Mottahedeh, *Loyalty*: 105–107. For the juxtaposition of *sīra* and *targama* on the one hand and *mu'ḡam* and *ṭabaqāt* on the other, while translating only *mu'ḡam* as biographical dictionary because of an implied alphabetical order, see: Robinson, *Historiography*: 61, 64, and 67.

Nonetheless, Robinson does not discuss al-Qāḍī's considerations, although he states "it is not enough to recycle indigenous categories, since they cannot guide us to any single, 'authentic' meaning of texts and genres" (58). For a concise summary of the debate surrounding the origins of biographical dictionaries see: Gilliot, "Ṭabaqāt": 8–9.

110. For a survey of approaches to biographical dictionaries, see the introductory remarks about how to extract data for the history and historiography of Islamic societies from these works: Bulliet, *Patricians*: xi–xii; Bulliet, *Conversion*: 5, 18–19, and 142–143 notes 5–6; Chamberlain, *Knowledge*: 18–20; Cooperson, *Classical Arabic Biography*: 18–23; Ephrat, *Learned Society*: 11–13; Hourani, "Islamic History": 15–16; Petry, *Civilian Elite of Cairo*: 5–14. However, those pragmatic considerations are of no consequence for the conceptual question of *kitāb al-ṭabaqāt* and *kitāb al-tarāḡīm*, asked by al-Qāḍī and discussed in the preceding note.

The first biographical dictionaries were compiled in the ninth century.¹¹¹ Their ordering principle is the grouping and ranking of many men, and occasionally a few women, covering the whole *umma* and its history, or being restricted to specific periods, regions and achievements.¹¹² In twelfth-century Khurasan, Abū al-Ḥasan °Alī b. Zaid b. Funduq al-Baihaqī (1100–1170) compiled the first biographical dictionary that contains an entry for Rāḡib.¹¹³ Outside Iran, the Syrian Šams al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Dahabī (1274–1348 or 1352) was the first to include Rāḡib in a biographical dictionary. In the *Siyar °alām al-nubalā* (Noble Men’s Biographies), one of his own abridgments of the *Ta’rīḥ al-islām* (Chronicle of Islam), he provided a short notice about Rāḡib.¹¹⁴ Dahabī’s younger contemporary Šalāḥ al-Dīn Ḥalīl al-Šafadī (1297–1363) added Rāḡib’s obituary, though without even an estimated date of death, to his *Kitāb al-wāfī bi-l-wafayāt* (The Trustworthy Keeper’s Book of Death Certificates).¹¹⁵ Yet the first explicit reference to the *Muḥāḍarāt* trailed the oldest known manuscript of the anthology by more than three

111. Wadād al-Qāḍī in Atiyeh, *Book*: 97–101.

112. For the distinction between *general* and *restricted* biographical dictionaries, see: Wadād al-Qāḍī in Atiyeh, *Book*: 94–96.

113. Ibn Funduq, *Ta’rīḥ*: 112–113 s.v. 62. For the question of whether this author was known as Ibn Funduq or Baihaqī, see: Halm, “Bayhaqī”: 895. Arabists seem to prefer Baihaqī (e.g., Madelung, “Ar-Rāḡib al-Iṣfahānī”: 155 and 156 note 26). In contrast, specialists of medieval Iranian history (e.g., Pourshariati, “Local Historiography”: 140) often opt for Ibn Funduq to easier distinguish between this Iranian author of Arabic and Persian works and Abū al-Faḍl al-Baihaqī (995–1077), who is famous for his Persian history.

114. Dahabī, *Siyar*, 18: 120–121 s.v. 60. For the relationship between the *Siyar* and the *Ta’rīḥ*, see: Ben Cheneb and de Somogyi, “al-Dahabī”: 215–216 s.v. 6. One of the curious aspects of Dahabī’s work is that the *Ta’rīḥ* itself does not contain a biographical entry for Rāḡib.

115. Šafadī, *Wāfī*: 45 s.v. 44.

centuries. The fragment in the British Library is dated 6 February 1129,¹¹⁶ while the Egyptian polymath Abū al-Faḍl °Abd al-Rāḥmān Ġalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (1445–1505) was the first to name the anthology in his *Buġyat al-wu°āt fī ṭabaqāt al-luġawīn wa-l-nuḥāt* (The Vessel’s Desire for Generations of Philologists and Grammarians), a biographical dictionary of lexicographers and linguists.¹¹⁷ Suyūṭī identified the titles of three works ascribed to Rāġib: the well-known *Mufradāt alfāẓ al-Qur’ān* (Dictionary of the Koran) , the obscure *Afānīn al-balāġa* (Arts of Rhetoric)¹¹⁸ and the *Muḥāḍarāt*. The entry attests that Suyūṭī primarily appreciated Rāġib as the author of works on Arabic lexicography and rhetoric.¹¹⁹ In the following centuries, Suyūṭī’s opinion of Rāġib, and especially the data provided in this biographical dictionary became the most important source for Rāġib, and so the *Muḥāḍarāt* was almost always mentioned whenever Rāġib’s name came up. In

116. London, British Library, MS arab. Add. 18,529.

117. Suyūṭī, *Buġya*: “la-hū Mufradāt al-Qur’ān wa-Afānīn al-balāġa wa-l-Muḥāḍarāt” (296 s.v. al-Mufaḍḍal).

118. Suyūṭī was also the first to mention the *Afānīn al-balāġa* that in turn was included in the biographical dictionaries and book catalogues, if their compilers consulted the *Buġyat*. However, Brockelmann did not mention the *Afānīn* at all (GAL 1: 289, and GAL S 1: 506; compare: Brockelmann, “al-Rāġhib al-Iṣfahānī”). At the moment two different identifications are on the table. Sārīsī did not include the *Afānīn* in his list of Rāġib’s works, even though he quoted it in passing because he quoted Suyūṭī (Sārīsī, *Al-Rāġhib al-Iṣfahānī*: 49–88, especially 57, and 287–288). But Sārīsī discovered two manuscripts of a *Maġma° al-balāġa*, ascribed to Rāġib. He did not discuss that no one ever ascribed such a work to Rāġib before his discovery (compare: Rowson, “al-Rāġhib al-Iṣfahānī”: 389). In the introduction to the *Maġma°* edition Sārīsī first considered it not impossible that this work is actually the *Afānīn* (Rāġib, *Maġma°*, 1: 6 note 1) and then compared it to the *Muḥāḍarāt*, concluding that Rāġib wrote the *Muḥāḍarāt* before the *Maġma°* (19–21). In contrast, Rowson suggested that the *Maġma°* be identified with the lost *Kitāb al-ma°ānī al-akbar* (The Greatest Book of Rhetorical Figures), mentioned by Katip Çelebi (compare: Ḥāġġī Ḥalīfa, *Kaṣf al-zunūn*, 5: 616), and the *Afānīn* with an untitled Yale manuscript (Rowson, “al-Rāġhib al-Iṣfahānī”: 389–390). For a conflation of both speculations, compare: Thomas, “Concept of *Muḥāḍara*”: 154–155 note 6.

119. Suyūṭī also included Rāġib in his main work on the Arabic language, *al-Muḥir fī °ulūm al-luġa wa-anwā°ihā* (The Luminous Book about the Language Sciences and their Various Branches), though he discussed only the merits of the *Mufradāt* in connection with his discussion of clarity (*ma°rifat al-faṣḥā*): Suyūṭī, *Muḥir*, 1: 184 and 201.

Koran exegesis and scholarship of *ḥadīth* (stories about the prophet Muḥammad), Suyūṭī's influence is the most obvious. The Sunnite theologians Faḥr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (1149–1209) and Muḥammad b. Bahādur al-Zarkaṣī (1344–1391) had referred to Rāḡib without also referring to his *Muḥāḍarāt*, but the anthology's title appeared in a twentieth-century Shi'ite *ḥadīth* commentary by ʿAbbās b. Muḥammad Riḍā al-Qummī (1877–1941) because he quoted Suyūṭī.¹²⁰

For the fifteenth-century Mamluk scholar Suyūṭī, the reference to the *Muḥāḍarāt* was not of primary importance. In general, Islamic manuscripts do not have indices that would offer additional keys to the various tidbits of information that are gathered in a biographical dictionary within the organizational framework of individual names, be they *isms* (personal names), *kunyas* (patronymics), *nisbas* (names of origin), or *laqabs* (monikers and honorifics).¹²¹ Suyūṭī arranged the selected biographies in alphabetical order, and so his reference to the *Muḥāḍarāt* can only be retrieved if one knows the full name of its author.¹²² This situation, however, changed in the sixteenth century. After Selim I (ruled 1512–1520) had completed the Ottoman conquest of the central Arab lands and taken the title caliph, the Ottoman empire was at the height of its power during the reign of Süleyman Qânûni (ruled 1520–1566). Now scholars surveyed the Arabic literary

120. Faḥr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Asās*: 5; Zarkaṣī, *Burhān*, 4: 468–469 s.v. al-Rāḡib al-Iṣfahānī; and Qummī, *Safmat*, 1: 529. Qummī, however, does not identify Suyūṭī's *Buġya* as his source.

121. Until the eighteenth century, Islamic manuscripts contained in the introduction a survey of contents that did not provide precise folio or page references: Déroche, *Manuel*: 337.

122. Suyūṭī's treatment of Rāḡib's name is rather confusing. In the *Buġya* he listed Rāḡib's biography under the *ism* al-Mufaddal (Suyūṭī, *Buġya*: 296), but in the *Muzhir* he determined al-Muḍḍal as the *ism* of Rāḡib's paternal grandfather (Suyūṭī, *Muzhir*, 1: 201). For a detailed analysis of the transmission of the components of Rāḡib's name, see below, chapter III, note 40.

heritage for Ottoman audiences and compiled catalogues of Arabic literature, in which the vast tradition of Arab-Islamic knowledge was no longer imagined as an assembly of learned individuals, but was transformed into a collection of books.¹²³

Taşköprüzade (1495–1560) conceived the *Miftāḥ al-saʿāda wa-miṣbāḥ al-siyāda fī maudūʿāt al-ʿulūm* (The Key to Happiness and the Lamp of Command over the Matters of Knowledge) as a systematic catalogue of Arabic textbooks that presented an Islamic curriculum in two parts. The first concerns the study of the visible world—“fī al-irṣād ilā kaifiya taḥṣīl ṭarīq al-naẓar”¹²⁴—and explicates in six sections, of quite differing length, Arabic script, Arabic language and literature, intellectual pursuits, natural sciences, political sciences, and the *ṣarʿa*. In contrast, the second part consists only out of a single section about spiritual knowledge: “fī ʿulūm al-bāṭin.”¹²⁵ In the section about Arabic language and literature, Taşköprüzade divided the contents into three chapters and proceeded from single words (*mufradāt*) to sentences (*murakkabāt*) and the genres of Arabic literature (*furūʿ al-ʿulūm al-ʿarabīya*).¹²⁶ He identified Rāḡib’s *Muḥāḍarāt* as a

123. Ottoman scholars were not the first, of course, to compile book catalogues instead of biographical dictionaries. The most important example is the *Fihrist* by Ibn al-Nadīm (died 987 or 995), a book dealer in Abbasid Baghdad. However, the crucial difference between the reference work by Ibn al-Nadīm and by Ottoman scholars, such as Taşköprüzade and Katip Çelebi, is that Ibn al-Nadīm compiled his catalogue as a bookdealer’s list of books in circulation, while the catalogues by Taşköprüzade and Katip Çelebi were not conceived for such a concrete economic enterprise. For the interdependency between an oral transmission of knowledge and an uninterrupted chain of acknowledged authorities, compare: Wilfried Barner in Herzog and Koselleck, *Epochenschwelle*: “‘Reine Form’ ist die mündliche Weitergabe sakralen Wissens (als Zeugnisschaft, Katachese usw.), aber auch, als diachron-personale Kontinuitätsbedingung, die successio der geistlichen Funktionsträger.” (13 note 56). For the roughly contemporary emergence of bibliographies in sixteenth-century western Europe, compare: Burke, *Social History*: 93 and 103–107.

124. Taşköprüzade, *Miftāḥ*, 1: 73.

125. Taşköprüzade, *Miftāḥ*, 3: 7.

126. Taşköprüzade, *Miftāḥ*, 1: 95–285; the *mufradāt* section comprises pp.95–143, the one about *murakkabāt* pp.144–270, and the one about the *furūʿ al-ʿulūm al-ʿarabīya* pp.270–285.

book for the study of *‘ilm al-muḥāḍara*, one of the fields of knowledge constituting the second chapter about sentences.¹²⁷ Taşköprüzade defined *‘ilm al-muḥāḍara* as “the aptitude to quote a statement by someone else in a way appropriate with regard to its conventional meanings or with regard to its peculiar form,”¹²⁸ listing more than twenty titles of books that are useful for the study of *‘ilm al-muḥāḍara*, most of which do not have the noun *muḥāḍara* in their title.¹²⁹ It is unclear whether Taşköprüzade himself knew Rāḡib’s *Muḥāḍarāt*. He referred to the work as “(Funūn al-muḥāḍarāt) li-l-Rāḡib

127. Ṭāşkubrîzâde, *Miftāḥ*, 1: 226.

For a sociolinguistic interpretation of *‘ilm al-muḥāḍara* as an *adab* discipline that provides the conceptual tool to analyze compilations, such as Rāḡib’s *Muḥāḍarāt*, see: Thomas, “Concept of *Muḥāḍara*”: 22–89 and 153. Taşköprüzade, however, did not use the terms *adab* or *adabîyāt* to define a non-religious field of knowledge; for the speculation that Taşköprüzade substituted the term *muḥāḍara* for *kutub al-adab* or *kutub al-adabîya*, see: 88. Thomas herself first admits that *‘ilm al-muḥāḍara* is “an overlooked and taxonomically indistinct *adab* discipline” (99) and then relies on the eminent authority of ‘Amr b. Baḥr al-Ġāḥiẓ (c. 776–869) and his *Al-Bayān wa-l-tabyīn* (Eloquence and Elucidation) to “explore the conceptual foundation and rhetorical aspects of *muḥāḍara*” (99) in his “pre-scholastic conception of eloquence” (99–100), although “al-Jāḥiẓ does not use the word *muḥāḍara* in *al-Bayān*” (106). She also tried to establish a link between Ġāḥiẓ and Rāḡib by observing the unsurprising fact that Rāḡib excerpted the very famous *Bayān* for his anthology (165 note 27, and 201). Despite her pragmatic approach of perceiving the *Muḥāḍarāt* as a collection of quotables apt for concrete communication situations, Thomas does not explain how literary Arabic was used by the speakers of Arabic dialects and other languages. Nor does she consider how the coexistence of various languages and dialects changed between the ninth and sixteenth centuries: Why was the *Muḥāḍarāt* still praised by the Ottoman scholar Taşköprüzade, even though its contents was never adjusted to changing linguistic realities?

128. Ṭāşkubrîzâde, *Miftāḥ*: “malakat irād kalāmin li-l-ġair munāsibin li-l-maqām min ġihat ma‘āniya-hā <sic> al-waḍ‘īya au min ġihat tarkībī-hī al-ḥāṣṣ” (1: 226).

Thomas, following Wolfhart Heinrichs, suggests that the term *muḥāḍara* should be translated as “apt quotable”: Thomas, “Concept of *Muḥāḍara*”: 28; compare: Heinrichs, “Classification”: 120 and 139. However, Rāḡib’s *Muḥāḍarāt* is a late-tenth- or early-eleventh-century work, whereas the first mention of an *‘ilm al-muḥāḍara* occurred in the twelfth century: Thomas, “Concept of *Muḥāḍara*”: 40. While Heinrich correctly pointed out that theoretical classifications of knowledge are always secondary phenomena (Heinrichs, “Classification”: 139), it seems nevertheless problematic to project a later definition onto earlier texts, claiming that Rāḡib compiled his *Muḥāḍarāt* for social practices that are the implicit context of this later definition. A secondary process of reception and use remains different from the author’s primary process of conception.

129. Ṭāşkubrîzâde, *Miftāḥ*, 1: 226–235; compare the survey on the term *muḥāḍara* in titles by Thomas, “Concept of *Muḥāḍara*”: 89–98.

al-İşfahānī” and “al-Muḥāḍarāt”¹³⁰ without ever quoting its complete correct title of *Muḥāḍarāt al-udabā’ wa-muḥāwarāt al-šū‘arā’ wa-l-bulaḡā’*. He did not volunteer any personal remark about the work, whereas in other cases he stated explicitly either the source of a judgment or his personal point of view.¹³¹ But Taşköprüzade’s classification indicates, first, that Rāḡib’s *Muḥāḍarāt* enjoyed enough popularity to be included in his catalogue and, second, that it enjoyed popularity as a textbook the described usefulness of which seemed to lie somewhere between dictionary and thesaurus.

In the seventeenth century, roughly two generations after Taşköprüzade, Katip Çelebi (1609–1657) compiled his extensive catalogue of Arabic literature, the *Kaşf al-ẓunūn ‘an asāmī al-kutub wa-l-funūn* (Disclosure of Opinions about Book Titles and the Branches of Knowledge), frequently quoting from his predecessor’s work, yet choosing a mechanical principle to order his data. Katip Çelebi listed all titles in strictly alphabetical order from *alif* to *yā’*, using a limited number of technical terms as section headings that mark, like signposts, the otherwise uninterrupted flow of more than fourteen-thousand titles. The alphabetical order is important because it allows readers to do something that is impossible in Taşköprüzade’s *Miftāḥ al-sa‘āda*: They can search the *Kaşf al-ẓunūn* without having first to grapple with understanding a system comparable to

130. Tāşkubrīzāde, *Miftāḥ*, 1: 226 and 283.

131. Compare, for example: Tāşkubrīzāde, *Miftāḥ*: “wa-ra’aitu fī ḥādā al-‘ilm kitāban mausūman (‘Uyūn al-anbā’ fī ṭabaqāt al-aṭibbā’))” *I have seen a characteristic book on this field of knowledge: The prime news about the biographies of physicians* (1: 285); and “wa-lā anfa‘a min taṣnīf Ibn Sīnā wa-l-imām al-Rāzī” *Nothing is more useful than the work by Ibn Sīnā and by the master al-Rāzī* (1: 348).

Taşköprüzade's Islamic curriculum.¹³² Rāḡib's *Muḥāḍarāt* appears as the first title under *‘ilm al-muḥāḍara*, but in the section about *‘ilm al-ṣuwar al-kawākib*—the astronomical knowledge of the constellations—Katip Çelebi also offered the guess that *Ṣaiqal al-fahm* (Burnisher of Comprehension) was used as its alternative title.¹³³ Although the different titles of Rāḡib's anthology appear under different keywords, the mechanical principle of arranging all titles in alphabetical order even accommodates books the precise contents of which were unbeknownst to Katip Çelebi, as in case of the *Ṣaiqal al-fahm*. This seems to indicate that already in sheer numbers the general availability of books within the Ottoman empire rendered it infeasible for one individual to examine in person every work to be known in circulation. Besides, titles are not necessarily appropriate and correct labels of a text's contents in that they are also always marketing tools, directed at a patron or any other buying customer.¹³⁴ Katip Çelebi, however, did not just compile a list of titles. Like Taşköprüzade, he defined his keywords, occasionally even quoting Taşköprüzade's definitions from the *Miftāḥ al-sa'āda*,¹³⁵ and cautiously annotated some titles with sundry comments. While Taşköprüzade's entry about the *Muḥāḍarāt*

132. For the alphabetization of reference works in western Europe, see: Burke, *Social History*: 109–110, 115, and 184–187.

133. Ḥāḡḡī Ḥalīfa, *Kaṣf al-zunūn*, 5: 414–415, and 4: 114. Katip Çelebi did not justify his guess, but compare how Rāḡib himself described the usefulness of his anthology: Rāḡib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ed. Beirut: “an aḥṭara la-hū [i.e., saiyidi-nā] mimmā ṣannaftu... yaḡ‘alu-hū ṣaiqal al-fahm <sic>” *that I choose for him [i.e., our master] from that which I have compiled... to make him a tool to refine his discernment* (1: 7).

134. For the textbook market in sixteenth-century Britain, see: Kristian Jensen in Hellinga and Trapp, *History of the Book*: 364. To date there is no systematic study of the medieval and premodern conventions for naming texts, be they written in Arabic, Persian or Ottoman; for a preliminary consideration of the relationship between Arabic titles and work, see: Wickens, “Notional Significance;” for a quantitative study of titles of medieval Arabic literature, see: Ambros, “Beobachtungen.”

135. Ḥāḡḡī Ḥalīfa, *Kaṣf al-zunūn*: “qāla Abū al-Ḥair fī *Miftāḥ al-sa'āda*: huwa ‘ilmun yaḥṣulu min-hu malakat irād kalāmin li-l-ḡair” (5: 414).

documents how the work was classified within an Islamic curriculum, Katip Çelebi called the anthology the principal work of *‘ilm al-muḥāḍara*, providing evidence that seventeenth-century Ottoman intellectuals held the work in high esteem.¹³⁶ Esteem is not the same as popularity, but the seventeen manuscripts, recorded in nineteenth- and twentieth-century catalogues of Ottoman collections, suggest that Rāḡib’s *Muḥāḍarāt* was actually in demand and not just touted by some lone scholars.

The catalogues by Taşköprüzade and Katip Çelebi have remained major reference works of Arabic literature because they offer the possibility of identifying works by title alone. Consequently, both became important bibliographies to European scholars who sometimes even studied Arabic literature through an Ottoman lens, relying not only on the Ottoman data collections, but accepting also an Ottoman point of view.¹³⁷ When Joseph von Hammer (1774–1856) wrote his entry about Oriental anthologies for the *Ersch-Gruber’sche Encyclopädie*, he summarized both entries on *‘ilm al-muḥāḍara* and also included Katip Çelebi’s good opinion of the *Muḥāḍarāt*.¹³⁸ Hammer’s protégé Flügel, who had also edited the *Kaṣf al-ẓunūn*, sided then with both Katip Çelebi and Hammer when he praised the *Muḥāḍarāt* in his Vienna catalogue, which was published

136. Ḥāḡḡī Ḥalīfa, *Kaṣf al-ẓunūn*: “wa-huwa ‘umdat ḥādā al-fann baina al-fuḍalā’” *it is the fundamental work of this discipline among distinguished men.* (5: 414).

137. Adnang, “Catalogue”: “the catalogues compiled by Ahlwardt, Brockelmann, and their venerable precursor in the vast field of Arabic bibliography, Hajji Khalifa.” (496–497).

138. Hammer, “Anthologie”: “das geschätzteste große Werk dieser Art” (268); compare Hammer’s reference to Katip Çelebi as the main source of his article on Arabic anthologies in: Ṭa‘ālibī, *Muḥtaṣarāt*: III–IV.

between 1865 and 1867.¹³⁹ Esteem for Rāḡib's anthology had thus entered European scholarship and was still echoed by Carl Brockelmann (1868–1956), who toward the end of the nineteenth century placed the *Muḥāḍarāt* at the very top of his list of works by Rāḡib.¹⁴⁰ However, in the second half of the twentieth century Ulrich Marzolph sternly proclaimed that in the *Muḥāḍarāt* Rāḡib can seem a dull hack,¹⁴¹ and Everett Rowson reduced esteem for the *Muḥāḍarāt* to a relative popularity whose actual extent in Islamic societies he neither explored nor explained.¹⁴² At the same time, Rowson adhered to the pattern established by Brockelmann, as Rowson too began his list of Rāḡib's works with the *Muḥāḍarāt*, giving an astonishing prominence to a work that until the sixteenth century had been completely overshadowed by Rāḡib's exegetical and philosophical writings.

It is this assumption of the *Muḥāḍarāt*'s prominent role in Rāḡib's oeuvre that currently differentiates western from Arab and Iranian scholarship. For in Arabic biographical dictionaries of the nineteenth and twentieth century, when Pan-Islamism as

139. Flügel, *Handschriften*: "ein Haupt- und Musterwerk dieser Gattung, welches der Verfasser... aus seinem Vorrath an eigenen Schöpfungen und seinen Sammlungen aus den Schriften Anderer verfasste." (1: 341 s.v. 369). For Hammer's promotion of Flügel's research, see Hammer's preface to Flügel's edition of the unrecognized *Muḥāḍarāt* fragment: *Ta'ālībī, Muḥtaṣarāt*: I–VIII, sepecially VII–VIII.

140. GAL 1: 289. The first volume of GAL was published in 1895, and almost four decades later Brockelmann organized Rāḡib's works in a different order, placing the works on Koran exegesis before the *Muḥāḍarāt*: Brockelmann, "al-Rāḡib al-Isfahānī."

141. Marzolph, *Arabia ridens*: "ar-Rāḡib al-Isfahānī, dessen Enzyklopädie aus einzelnen thematisch begrenzten Kapiteln besteht, die stereotyp mit Koranzitaten und Aussprüchen des Propheten Muhammed beginnen und sich dann in einer derartig massiven Häufung von Gedichtzitaten und rudimentär verknüpften Zitaten und Erzählungen ergehen, daß es gelegentlich schwer fällt, den Autor nicht als geistlosen 'Materialhuber' zu taxieren." (1: 46).

142. Rowson, "al-Rāḡib al-Isfahānī": "his best-known work" (389); compare: Brockelmann, "al-Rāḡib al-Isfahānī": "Am verbreitesten ist sein Adabbuch *Muḥāḍarāt*" (1186). Brockelmann too did not explain how he reached the conclusion that the *Muḥāḍarāt* is the most popular of Rāḡib's works.

well as Arab, Turkish and Iranian nationalisms emerged in Islamic societies, Arab and Turkish authors did not single out the *Muḥāḍarāt* as either important or remarkably popular. Their disinterested attitude does not offer any indication as to whether the *Muḥāḍarāt* was actually still studied as a textbook in the way Suyūṭī, and perhaps Katip Çelebi, had encountered the work itself as readers. The *Muḥāḍarāt* seems now to have achieved the status of a literary monument that has stayed in print since the 1870s because a copy of the anthology is a prestigious object to own, though perhaps no longer a textbook to study. That men and women have owned books for reasons other than study and entertainment has been often observed since the beginning of book manufacture in the ancient Middle East.¹⁴³ Aside from the expensive, rare books that are coveted by collectors and connoisseurs, people buy books to acquire for themselves the physical embodiment of their own literary tradition, even if they never get round to reading and studying those books. The emerging Arab nationalism appears as one factor that supported an antiquarian attitude of Arab audiences toward the *Muḥāḍarāt* and hence produced demand for the work, considered now a classic of the Arabic literary tradition. The Ottoman scholar Ismail Paşa (1839–1920) listed in the *Hadīyat al-ʿārifīn* (Gift of Learned Men) under Rāḡib’s name the titles of all works ascribed to Rāḡib in alphabetical order.¹⁴⁴ The Maronite Christian Yusūf b. Ilyān Sarkīs (1856–1932) compiled the *Muʿğam al-maṭbūʿāt al-ʿarabīya wa-l-muʿarraba* (Lexicon of Printed Arabic Books and Arabic Translations) after he had left his work for an Ottoman bank to

143. For the differences between working copies and status symbols with regard to fifteenth-century manuscripts of the English common law, see: J.H. Baker in Hellinga and Trapp, *History of the Book*: 422.

144. Ismāʿīl Bāšā, *Hadīyat al-ʿārifīn*, 1: col.311.

open a bookstore in Cairo in 1912.¹⁴⁵ Sarkīs conceived this biographical dictionary as a bookdealer's database for Arabic books in print and thus paid much attention to bibliographical details. In the *Mu'ğam* he provided basic biographical information about Rāḡib, followed by an alphabetical list of five titles, available in print in Egypt in the 1910s and 1920s.¹⁴⁶ In contrast, Ḥair al-Dīn al-Ziriklī (1893–1976) included much less specific data in his vast *al-A'lam* (Distinguished Men). He listed eleven titles ascribed to Rāḡib, just indicating with *ṭā'* or *ḥā'* whenever he was aware of printed editions and manuscripts, though unfortunately not identifying publishers or manuscript collections.¹⁴⁷ In the second half of the twentieth century, the Jordanian scholar ʿUmar ʿAbd al-Rāḡmān al-Sārīsī acknowledged the *Muḥāḍarāt*'s fame, but it is just a relative fame among the few works that do not concern dogma, ethics or Koran exegesis and hence rank last on his list of Rāḡib's works.¹⁴⁸

The preeminence of the title catalogues by Taşköprüzade and Katip Çelebi can be further gauged by the absence of any other title catalogue for the next three centuries. Only in the 1930s did the Iranian scholar Muḥammad Muḥsin Āḡā Buzurg Tihirānī (1876–1970) begin the publication of his monumental *al-Darʿa ilā taṣānīf al-šʿa* (Guide to the Writings of the Shiʿa), the last volumes of which were still unpublished by the late

145. Ziriklī, *A'lam*, 9: 290–291; and Sadgrove, “Sarkīs Family.”

146. Sarkīs, *Mu'ğam*: col.921–923.

147. Ziriklī, *A'lam*, 2: 279.

148. Sārīsī, *Al-Rāḡib al-Isfahānī*: “huwa ašhar mušannafāt al-Rāḡib al-adabīya” it is the most widely known of Rāḡib's adab works (85). Sārīsī divided Rāḡib's oeuvre into four groups: “‘aqīda” doctrine (49–56), “aḥlāq” ethics (56–68), “tafsīr” Koran commentary (68–84), and “āṭaru-hū al-adabī wa-l-luḡawī” his works on adab and linguistics (85–88). The last section is not only the shortest of the four sections; despite the plural *āṭar* Sārīsī discussed just two works: the *Muḥāḍarāt* and the *Maḡma' al-balāḡa*.

1980s. Since Āgā Buzurg Tihrānī conceived the *Darfa* as an alphabetical Arabic catalogue of every Arabic text ever ascribed to a Shi'ite author,¹⁴⁹ his catalogue supplemented rather than challenged the work of his two predecessors. He included Rāgib's writings because of his alleged Shi'ite affiliations, but no word in the entry about the *Muḥāḍarāt* suggests that the work itself enjoyed any kind of reputation among Shi'ite scholars.¹⁵⁰ A similarly neutral attitude toward the anthology can be observed in the works of his two Iranian contemporaries, the already mentioned ʿAbbās b. Muḥammad Ridā al-Qummī¹⁵¹ and Muḥammad Qazwīnī (1877–1949). Qummī's quote from Suyūṭī's *Buġya* does not indicate whether he had any personal opinion of the *Muḥāḍarāt*.¹⁵² The posthumously published notes by Qazwīnī contain fourteen pages about Rāgib in which Qazwīnī focused on name variants and a possible date of death to locate Rāgib more precisely in the intellectual circles of Buyid Iran.¹⁵³ Qazwīnī was thoroughly acquainted with European scholarship, and his references to the *Muḥāḍarāt* do not go beyond the verbatim quotes from the catalogues by Tašköprüzade and Katip Çelebi.¹⁵⁴

Twentieth-century Arabists who were trained in Europe and North America tended to focus on the Arabic literature that originated before the Mongol conquest of the

149. Algar, H. "Āqā Bozorg Tihrānī": 169.

150. Āgā Buzurg Tihrānī, *Darfa*, 20: 128 s.v. 2237.

151. According to Brockelmann, Qummī was an Iranian Shi'ite theologian: GAL S 2: 840 s.v. 99.

152. Qummī, *Safīnat*, 1: 529.

153. Qazwīnī, *Yād dāšt-hā*, 5: 2–15.

154. For Qazwīnī's interpretation of the statements by Tašköprüzade and Katip Çelebi, see: Qazwīnī, *Yād dāšt-hā*, 5: 6 and 8.

thirteenth century. For information on authors and works they relied on biographical dictionaries that were compiled before the sixteenth century, and hence were closer to the researched medieval authors, as well as on Ottoman title catalogues. Their dependance on both sources has obscured that the establishment of the Safavid dynasty through shah Ismāʿīl (ruled 1501–1524) led not only to the foundation of a Shiʿite empire but also to the appropriation of a literary Arabic tradition as a Shiʿite Iranian tradition. In contrast to the nondescript evidence for the *Muḥāḍarāt*’s late-nineteenth-century reception in the works by Āgā Buzurg Tihrānī, Qazwīnī and Qummī, between the end of the seventeenth and the first half of the twentieth century four Shiʿite authors compiled biographical dictionaries in Arabic and Persian in which they argued with the *Muḥāḍarāt* for Rāḡib’s Shiʿite affiliations. These scholars did not rely on the very few historical details, suggested by two Iranian sources from the eleventh and twelfth centuries: the history of Isfahan by al-Mufaḍḍal b. Saʿd al-Māfarrūḥī (eleventh century)¹⁵⁵ and the already

155. Māfarrūḥī, *Kitāb*: 32; compare the fourteenth-century translation: Māfarrūḥī, *Tarḡume*: 124. According to the fourteenth-century translator, Māfarrūḥī, wrote the work in 1030: “tarkīb-i buzūrgī az buzūrgān-i ḡahān u-fāḍilī az fuḍalāʾi zamān taʾrīḥ-i ān sane-yi iḥdā wa-ʿiṣrīn wa-arbaʿmiʿa allatī ittafaqat al-ḡāra al-šaʿwāʾbi-hā fī Iṣfahān nām-i ū Mufaḍḍal b. Saʿd b. al-Ḥusain al-Māfarrūḥī—raḥima-hū Allāh taʿālā—mafrūḡbi-asālīb-i ʿibārātī rāʾiq dar qawālīb-i ʿarabīyatī lāʾiq šāʾiq ḡunānke har saḡʿ az ān bi-ḥaqīqat waḥy-i fāʾiq u-ḥayy-i nāṭiq būd” *The composition of a great man among the great men of the world and of a learned man among the learned men of their time was an event of that hiḡra year 421 [i.e., 1030 CE], in which occurred the devastating raid of Isfahan. His name was Mufaḍḍal b. Saʿd b. al-Ḥusain al-Māfarrūḥī—may God the Sublime have mercy on him—accomplished with regard to the methods of style, pure in the forms of literary Arabic, worthy, and brilliant, just as every rhymed prose sentence by that man was truly excellent inspiration and rational living* (4). ʿAbbās Iqbāl, who edited the Persian translation, discussed this statement in his introduction (bāʾ– ḡīm). He accepted the translator’s statement in principle, but pointed to references suggesting some sections were composed during the reign of Seljuq sultan Malik Šāh Abū al-Faṭḥ Muʿizz al-Dīn (ruled 1073–1092). Still, Iqbāl warned that nonetheless there is no evidence as to whether Māfarrūḥī was still alive at that time. The early date of composition was already noticed by Browne, “Account of a Rare Manuscript History of Isfahan”: 414; compare: Storey 1,2: 349 s.v. 455; and Storey-Bregel 2: 1011–1012 s.v. 873 [455]. Yet some scholars—e.g., Bulliet, “Māfarrūḥī,” Madelung, “Ar-Rāḡib al-Iṣfahānī”: 163 postscript to 157; Paul, “Histories”: 117 note 3; and Ritter, Review—state that Māfarrūḥī probably wrote the work between 1073 and 1092.

mentioned biographical dictionary by Ibn Funduq.¹⁵⁶ Instead, they searched the *Muḥāḍarāt* for examples of how ʿAlī and his family were addressed, eulogized and honored, assuming that Rāḡib expressed his dogmatic positions in a textbook.¹⁵⁷ These references to the anthology do not allow any conclusions as to whether the work was still used as a textbook, though they do indicate that, in Iran, copies of the *Muḥāḍarāt*'s Arabic text were accessible and read—at least to gather evidence about Rāḡib himself. But none of these Shiʿite scholars referred to the *Muḥāḍarāt*'s Persian abridgment. Their silence could be explained with scholarly etiquette: scholars cite late-tenth- or early-eleventh-century Arabic texts in Arabic because they are scholars. However, it also conforms to the translation's scant manuscript evidence, since the three undated fragments in Meshed and Tehran do not suggest that the Persian version was ever widely popular in Iran.¹⁵⁸ While the rhetorical effort of arguing convincingly for Rāḡib's Shiʿite affiliations led these authors to write lengthier entries than their non-Shiʿite counterparts, the Shiʿite agenda is otherwise important because it reveals that among non-Shiʿite scholars the question of Rāḡib's dogmatic positions is rather downplayed and treated as a nonissue.

156. Ibn Funduq, *Taʾrīḥ*: 112–113 s.v. 62.

157. Compare this description of their procedure in Mudarris, *Raiḥānat al-adab*: “baʿḍi az ʿulamā bi-istinād-i īnke az ahl al-bait-i ʿiṣmat—ʿalai-him al-salām—bisyār riwāyat karde u-dar mauqīʿ-i riwāyat az ḥaḍrat-i amīr al-muʿminīn ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib—ʿalai-hi al-salām—faqaṭ bā ʿibārāt-i amīr al-muʿminīn taʿbīr āwarde u-az ḥulafā-yi dīkār ḥattā al-imkān riwāyat nakarde u-naẓāʾir-i īn-hā nisbat-i taṣayyuf bi-dū dādeʾand” *Some theologians use to attribute to him Shiʿite affiliations through relying upon that which he transmitted often about the members of ʿAlī's pure family—upon them be peace—and that he only used the phrase ‘amīr al-muʿminīn’ for reports about his excellency the Amīr al-Muʿminīn ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib—upon him be peace—and as far as possible avoided using it for reports about the other caliphs, and similar things.* (2: 292).

158. Meshed, Kitābhāne-yi markazī-yi Āstān-i quds-i raḍawī, MS pers. 4306; Tehran, Kitābhāne-yi Maḡlis-i šūrā-yi islāmī, MS pers. 308; and Tehran, Kitābhāne-yi markazī-yi Dānišgāh-i Tihrān, MS pers. 4503. For Muḡāhid's comments on the manuscripts, compare: Rāḡib, *Nawādir*: xxv.

Around 1700, the Safavid scholar Mīrzā ʿAbd Allāh Afandī b. ʿĪsā al-Iṣfahānī (died c.1718) compiled the *Riyāḍ al-ʿulamāʾ wa-ḥiyāḍ al-fuḍalāʾ* (The Meadows of Scholars and the Cisterns of Eminent Men), a comprehensive biographical dictionary of learned men associated with the Imāmīya, in which he included Rāḡib.¹⁵⁹ Afandī focused on Rāḡib’s credentials as a theologian, naming the titles of three works about Koran exegesis, aside from the *Muḥāḍarāt*. The larger part of the entry comprises a discussion of Rāḡib’s standing as an Imamite philosopher, and Afandī’s main argument is that in the *Asrār al-imāma* (Secrets of the Imāmīya) the obscure Imamite theologian ʿImād al-Dīn Ḥasan b. ʿAlī al-Ṭabarsī considered Rāḡib the first Imamite philosopher.¹⁶⁰ On the one hand, Afandī’s indifference to functional data for Rāḡib’s life recalls the biographical dictionaries by Dahabī and Safadī. On the other hand, unlike his thirteenth- and fourteenth-century predecessors, Afandī included the *Muḥāḍarāt* in the list of notable works.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the Qajar *muḡtahid* Saiyid Mīrzā Muḥammad Bāqir Ḥʾānsārī (1811–1895) collected the biographies of more than seven-hundred intellectuals and scholars in the *Raudāt al-ḡannāt fī aḥwāl al-ʿulamāʾ wa-l-sādāt* (Gardens of Paradise Concerning the Circumstances of Learned Men and the Prophet’s Descendants). In the imprint, the entry about Rāḡib runs a bit over thirty pages, most of

159. Afandī, *Riyāḍ al-ʿulamāʾ*, 2: 172. For the few known details of Afandī’s biography, see: Ziriklī, *Aʿlam*, 4: 251.

160. Ṭabarsī, *Asrār al-imāma*: 514; compare the introduction: xvii. The editors of this new edition suggest that Ṭabarsī was a contemporary of Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (died 1274): vii–viii.

which are filled with excerpts from the *Muḥāḍarāt*.¹⁶¹ There is no evidence whatsoever for Rāḡib's Shi'ite affiliations, and so Ḥ'ānsārī could only imply that Rāḡib practiced *taqīya*.¹⁶² He needed less than two pages to describe that he detected Shafi'ite positions in the *Muḥāḍarāt* and other scholars discussed Rāḡib's dogmatic allegiances, to quote Suyuṭī's entry from the *Buḡya*, and to provide a commented list of Rāḡib's works that ends with the *Muḥāḍarāt*:

He [i.e., Rāḡib] also wrote the very great book of the *Muḥāḍarāt*, whose name is linked to him and which exceeds ten volumes! In it, among the rarities of the aphorisms, the exquisite stories, and the unusual and delicate benefits is that which is not to be found in any other book by him. Among delicacies is that which he mentions in it and which does not desere that I exclude it from this book, so that it may bring the grace of God.¹⁶³

After this hyperbolic praise for Rāḡib's anthology Ḥ'ānsārī filled the following twenty-eight pages with passages from the *Muḥāḍarāt*, drawing on chapters from the beginning, the middle, and the end. It is unclear, though, that he actually knew the complete work because he is the only one to ever describe a version of the *Muḥāḍarāt* as being longer than ten volumes. The oldest preserved fragment of the *Muḥāḍarāt* shows that already at the beginning of the twelfth century the anthology's twenty-five chapters were divided into four volumes, and these volume divisions are still valid for the twentieth-century

161. Ḥ'ānsārī, *Raudāt al-ḡannāt*, 3: 197–227 s.v. 273; the quotes from the *Muḥāḍarāt* fill pp.199–226.

162. Ḥ'ānsārī, *Raudāt al-ḡannāt*: “wa-ka-anna-hū la-mā yatarā'ā min taqwiyyatin <sic> ḡānaba al-ḥaqq fī ba'd muṣannafātihi” *Although he appears to us right in his encouragement, he avoids the truth in some of his works.* (3: 197). Compare: Madelung, “Ar-Rāḡib al-Iṣfahānī”: 158.

163. Ḥ'ānsārī, *Raudāt al-ḡannāt*: “la-hū aīdan kitāb «al-Muḥāḍarāt» kabirūn ḡiddan ismu-hū ma'a-hū yazīdu 'alā 'aṣr muḡalladāt! Wa-fī-hī min nawādir al-ḥikam wa-l-ḥikāyāt al-ṭarīfa wa-'awā'id al-mustatrafā al-laṭīfa mā lā yūḡidu fī ḡair min kitābin. Wa-min laṭā'ifa mā ḡakara-hū fī-hī wa-ḥaqīqun bi-an lā aḡallā hādā al-kitāb min-hi li-ya'tiya bi-faḍl Allāh” (3: 199). In this passage the technical term for volume is *muḡallad*, and not *ḡuz*.

imprints, whether they are bound as one, two, or four volumes.¹⁶⁴ Ḥwānsārī finished the entry about Rāḡib with a short notice about his date and place of death, without discussing the numerous suggestions that had accumulated since the fifteenth century when Suyūṭī first compared and evaluated the available opinions on the matter.¹⁶⁵ That the *muḡtahid* Ḥwānsārī focused in such an extravagant manner on the *Muḡāḍarāt*—his praise is unique among all previous and succeeding references to the anthology—despite the considerable body of theological writings ascribed to Rāḡib, is further evidence that the *Rauḍāt al-ḡannāt* presents partisan positions.¹⁶⁶ Ḥwānsārī’s utilization of the

164. London, British Library, MS arab. Add. 18,529: “al-ḡild al-rābi‘ min al-Muḡāḍarāt li-l-Rāḡib” (fol.1r), and “al-muḡallada al-rābi‘a min kitāb al-Muḡāḍarāt” (fol.3r). Compare the 1961 imprint for which the *Muḡāḍarāt*’s text is divided into two parts that are bound in four volumes (*aḡzā’*) and the 1999 imprint of the Persian abridgment in one volume, even though in these twentieth-century imprints the number of chapters per volume is not identical with those of the twelfth-century fragment: Rāḡib, *Muḡāḍarāt*, ed. Beirut, 4: 725; and Rāḡib, *Nawādir*: zā’-ḡā’.

165. Ḥwānsārī, *Rauḍāt al-ḡannāt*, 3: 227. Ḥwānsārī mentioned that in the *Aḡbār al-bašar* by Abū al-Fidā’ (1273–1331) he found among the events of the *hiḡra* year 565 [i.e., 1170 CE], a death notice for the sheikh Abū al-Qāsim al-Iṣfahānī. In a recent edition of this extremely popular universal history, which is not a critical edition based on manuscripts, there is not a death notice for Rāḡib among the events of the *hiḡra* year 565: Abū al-Fidā’, *Muḡtaṣar*, 3: 63–64. Yet, among the events of the *hiḡra* year 465 [i.e., 1073 CE], there is a death notice for *al-Imām Abū al-Qāsim* ‘Abd al-Karīm b. Hawāzin b. ‘Abd al-Malik al-Qušairī al-Nisābūrī (2: 271; italics mine). Moreover, this man is called sheikh and was the author of a good Koran commentary. Since Ḥwānsārī concluded that Rāḡib died before Zamahšārī (died 1144), it seems very probable that 565 is a typographical error; compare: Āḡā Buzurg Tihirānī, *Darfa*, 5: 46 s.v. 179. Otherwise, Ḥwānsārī’s unique reference to Abū al-Fidā’ has caused a bit of confusion; see: Madelung, “Ar-Rāḡib al-Iṣfahānī”: 155; compare: Qazwīnī, *Yād dāst-hā*, 5: 11. But it is quite possible that the manuscript or imprint of the *Aḡbār al-bašar*, used by Ḥwānsārī, provided exactly this information because the *Aḡbār al-bašar* was transmitted with numerous continuations. Nonetheless, in some twentieth-century Shi‘ite reference works, the authors used Ḥwānsārī’s death date for Rāḡib without any further comment; see, for example: Mudarris, *Raiḡanat al-adab*, 2: 293; Āḡā Buzurg Tihirānī, *Darfa*, 1: 374 s.v. 1951; 10: 364 s.v. 133; and 21: 364 s.v. 5469; and Yūnusī, *Fihrist*, 1: 1243 s.v. 2559.

166. For Ḥwānsārī’s sectarian agenda, see: Hairī, “**Kh**wānsārī”: 1028.

Muḥāḍarāt suggests that strategically the anthology is the more useful work for a Shiʿite agenda because its outlook is so non-partisan.¹⁶⁷

In the first half of the twentieth century the Syrian theologian Muḥsin al-Ḥusainī al-ʿĀmilī (1865–1952) and the Iranian author Muḥammad ʿAlī Mudarris (c.1878–1954)—contemporaries of Āgā Buzurg Tihrānī, Qazwīnī and Qummī—compiled biographical dictionaries: the Arabic *Aʿyān al-šʿa* (Prominent Men of the Shiʿa) and the Persian *Raiḥānat al-adab fī tarāğim al-maʿrūfīn bi-l-kunya wa-l-laqaḥ* (Sweet Basil of Literature Concerning the Biographies of Men Known by their Surname and Moniker).¹⁶⁸ ʿĀmilī was a *muğtahid* of the Imāmīya,¹⁶⁹ like Ḥwānsārī, and his entry about Rāğib in the *Aʿyān al-šʿa* documents how much authority Ḥwānsārī’s *Rauḍāt al-ğannāt* enjoyed among Imamite theologians.¹⁷⁰ ʿĀmilī wrote his opinion of Rāğib, working with Ḥwānsārī’s text, yet never consulting the text of Rāğib’s anthology to double-check Ḥwānsārī’s conclusions.¹⁷¹ First, he compared the opinions of Suyūṭī, Katip

167. For example, the introduction concludes with eulogies that do not indicate any preference for a member of the Prophet’s family, such as ʿAlī, or for a theologian, such as Abū Ḥanīfa c.699–767), see: Rāğib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ed. Beirut: “sahhala Allāh ʿalai-nā mā yahmadu ʿuqbā-hu wa-waffaqa-nā fī ḡamīʿ umūri-nā la-mā yardā, wa-ḡaʿala ḡair aʿmāli-nā mā qarraba, inna-hū ʿalīm qadīr, niʿam al-maulā wa-niʿam al-naṣīr” *May God supply us with that which will praise His effort and may He grant us success in all our enterprises through that which will please Him. May He make that which will come close to our afterlives the best of our deeds. Behold, He is all-knowing and all-powerful, the blessings of the Lord and the blessings of the Supporter* (1: 8).

168. ʿĀmilī, *Aʿyān al-šʿa*, and Mudarris, *Raiḥānat al-adab*.

169. GAL S 2: 807–808 note 1; and Zirikī, *Aʿlam*, 6: 174–175.

170. ʿĀmilī, *Aʿyān al-šʿa*, 27: 220–228 s.v. 5475.

171. ʿĀmilī, *Aʿyān al-šʿa*: “nanqulu-hā min *Rauḍāt al-ğannāt* naqlan ʿan *al-Muḥāḍarāt*” *we quote these from the Rauḍāt al-ğannāt, according to the Muḥāḍarāt* (27: 224). ʿĀmilī’s reliance on Ḥwānsārī is further suggested by his description of the *Muḥāḍarāt* as a ten-volume book: “fī ʿaṣr muğalladāt” (27: 223); compare: Ḥwānsārī, *Rauḍāt al-ğannāt*: “kitāb «*al-Muḥāḍarāt*»... yazīdu ʿalā ʿaṣr muğalladāt” *the book of the Muḥāḍarāt, ... which exceeds ten volumes* (3: 199).

Çelebi, and Ḥwānsārī with regard to Rāḡib's date of death to decide that Ḥwānsārī had been wrong.¹⁷² Then, he juxtaposed the opinions of Afandī and Suyūṭī to conclude that Ḥwānsārī had proven Rāḡib's Shi'ite affiliations with *Muḥāḍarāt* quotes about °Alī and the Shi'ite imams.¹⁷³ After a list with ten works ascribed to Rāḡib, °Āmilī filled the remaining three quarters of the entry with his own selections from the *Muḥāḍarāt*.¹⁷⁴ In contrast, Mudarris's reliance on Shi'ite authorities, such as Afandī and Ḥwānsārī, appears much restrained in the *Raiḥānat al-adab*, since he seems to withhold judgment on the contentious issues of Shi'ite affiliations and dates of death. Mudarris followed the established Shi'ite conventions of discussing Rāḡib's biography in his comparatively short entry of less than two pages: dogmatic positions, an annotated list of ascribed works, quotations from the *Muḥāḍarāt*, and dates of death.¹⁷⁵

Irrespective of the different attitudes toward the *Muḥāḍarāt* as evidence for Rāḡib's Shi'ite affiliations, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Shi'ite scholars, inside and outside Iran, exhibited a perceptible interest in Rāḡib and his anthology. This trend corresponded to the manufacture of new *Muḥāḍarāt* codices in Qajar Iran. Among the identified Arabic *Muḥāḍarāt* manuscripts in Iranian libraries there are two copies of

172. °Āmilī, *A'ṡyān al-šfa*, 27: 220.

173. °Āmilī, *A'ṡyān al-šfa*, 27: 221; °Āmilī's citation of Ḥwānsārī's *Muḥāḍarāt* quotes fills approximately the following two pages.

174. °Āmilī, *A'ṡyān al-šfa*: "mu'allafātu-hū" (27: 223); "an *Muḥāḍarāti*-hī anna-hū ḡakara li-naḡsi-hī ḡāḡain al-baitain" (27: 224); and "mā intaḡabnā-hu min *Muḥāḍarāti*-hī" (27: 228).

175. Mudarris, *Raiḡānat al-adab*, 2: 292–293.

the complete anthology dated 1860 and 1868,¹⁷⁶ as well as one abridgment dated 1834.¹⁷⁷

However, the Arabic text remains to be published by an Iranian publishing house.

Scholars in Iran must still resort to the manuscripts, or the Egyptian and Lebanese imprints, if they want to consult the Arabic text. Moreover, the seventeenth-century

Persian translation seemed to have been forgotten.¹⁷⁸ Muğahid found only three fragments of Qazwīnī's abridgment when he prepared the work's critical edition.¹⁷⁹

Against this background, the publication of the *Nawādir* in Tehran in 1993 testifies that after one and a half century of learned lobbying the *Muḥāḍarāt* has reached the status of an important document of Iranian literary history: a historical monument, but no longer a practical textbook of Arabic.¹⁸⁰

II. e. The unique manuscript of the *Rāḥat*

The main document for the direct reception of Rāwandī's miscellany is the *Rāḥat*'s only complete manuscript. The dated colophon places this copy in the first half of the

176. Tabriz, Kitābhāne-yi millī, MS arab. 2559; compare: Yūnusī, *Fihrist*, 1: 1243–1244 s.v. 2559. Tehran, Kitābhāne-yi ʿumūmī-yi maʿārif, MS arab. adabiyāt 144; compare: ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, *Fihrist*: 178–179 s.v. 144.

177. Meshed, Kitābhāne-yi markazī-yi Āstān-i quds-i raḍawī, MS arab. 4990; compare: Fikrat, *Fihrist-i alifbāʾī*: 499 s.v. Muḥāḍarāt; and Rāḡib, *Nawādir*: xviii s.v. 9.

178. Muḥammad Qazwīnī's twelve pages of notes about Rāḡib contain no reference to the *Muḥāḍarāt*'s seventeenth-century Persian abridgment: Qazwīnī, *Yād dāšt-hā*, 5: 2–15.

179. Meshed, Kitābhāne-yi markazī-yi Āstān-i quds-i raḍawī, MS pers. 4306; Tehran, Kitābhāne-yi Maḡlis-i šūrā-yi islāmī, MS pers. 308; and Tehran, Kitābhāne-yi markazī-yi Dānišgāh-i Tihirān, MS pers. 4503. Compare: Rāḡib, *Nawādir*: xxv.

180. Rāḡib, *Nawādir*: “buzurgtarīn u-maʿrūftarīn aṭar-i Rāḡib kitāb-i *Muḥāḍarāt*-i ū-st” *the greatest and best-known work by Rāḡib is his Muḥāḍarāt* (xv). Muğahid also mentioned an unpublished dissertation about Rāḡib, defended at the University of Isfahan in 1975 by ʿAlī Mīr Lauḡī Falāwirḡānī (ix).

thirteenth century. However, its status as the work's only preserved manuscript must be considered with caution because the number of unidentified Islamic manuscripts in public and private collections is still considerable.¹⁸¹ The unique manuscript postulates the existence of at least one more copy of the work because the colophon documents that this single copy is not Rāwandī's autograph. Unfortunately, the colophon does not record whether the scribe worked from the autograph and whether he copied the miscellany for a specific patron. Today the *Rāḥat*'s manuscript is in Paris, for in 1899 the Bibliothèque nationale de France bought the volume as part of the Islamic manuscript collection of the eminent French scholar Charles Schefer (1820–1898).¹⁸² Francis Richard recently published two descriptions of the manuscript, in which he identified three of its Muslim owners between the thirteenth and eighteenth centuries.¹⁸³ Despite these important data, the ownership of the volume is not continuously accounted for. In addition, Schefer himself did not reveal how and where he acquired the manuscript.

The thirteenth-century manuscript is a simple, functional copy, whose scribe Ilyās b. ʿAbd Allāh identified himself in the short colophon.¹⁸⁴ The scribe used thick laid paper whose barely visible chain-lines run horizontally. The paper shows extensive waterstainage that occasionally impairs the legibility of the text. The scribe chose a large

181. For the uncatalogued private collections in Iran, see: Hadi Sharifi in Roper, *World Survey*, 1: 457.

182. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, MS supplément pers.1314; compare: Blochet, *Catalogue de la collection*: 65 s.v. 1314.

183. Richard, "Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, MS supplément pers.1314;" and Richard, *Splendeurs persans*: 42 s.v. 8.

184. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: 467 (fol.179r).

format with generous margins and prepared a layout that created solid text-blocks for both prose and verses.¹⁸⁵ His *nash* shows a number of ligatures between non-connecting letters, such as a ligature between *alif* and *dāl*, or *dāl*, which appeared in thirteenth-century manuscripts from Iran and then became conventional *šikaste* ligatures.¹⁸⁶ Ilyās b. °Abd Allāh used only two different inks, brown for the text and orange-red for the rubrication of chapter headings and keywords. The manuscript contains tables and drawings, again executed in brown and orange-red,¹⁸⁷ no decorative illumination and illustration. Although the text itself is complete, the list of sultans of the Great Seljuqs appears incomplete.¹⁸⁸ Ilyās b. °Abd Allāh spaced the fifteen names over more than three pages, leaving about five centimeters empty space beneath every name, where different hands filled in some of these blanks with bits of genealogical information (*šağare*) for some sultans. Muḥammad Iqbāl (1877–1938), who prepared the *Rāḥat*’s critical edition, noticed that Rāwandī’s list of sultans neither matched the sequence of reigns subsequently discussed in the institutional history of the Great Seljuq sultanate nor

185. Page format: 31.0 cm x 24.5 cm; writing surface: 26.0 cm x 17.5 cm; nineteen lines per page; and distance between two lines: 1.3 cm. The scribe could not use a uniform *mīstara* since the distribution of prose and verses changes from page to page, but traces of pricking and ruling are clearly visible on many folios. Cut-off comments on the margins document that the manuscript was cropped for the binding.

186. For reproduced pages, see: Schefer, “Tableau du règne”: the unnumbered plates; and Richard, “Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, MS supplément pers.1314.” For a thirteenth-century Iranian manuscript written in the same type of *nash*, compare this reproduction of a page from a dated codex in Leiden: Biegstraaten, *Omar Khayyām*: 23. For the *nasta’liq* ligature, see: Hanaway and Spooner, *Reading Nasta’liq*: 15–16.

187. Not all sketches are included in the critical edition. This omission is especially curious in the case of the sketches illustrating the measurements of Arabic letters according to the principle of *tanāsub*, as first proposed by Ibn Muqla (886–940), since this manuscript is one of the oldest preserved references to Ibn Muqla’s concept of proportionate script (*al-ḥaṭṭ al-mansūb*): Porter, *Textes persans*: 1. Traités de calligraphie. Some sketches were reproduced, though without any bibliographical reference to their origins, in: Schimmel, *Calligraphy*: 17.

188. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: 85–86 (fol.37v–fol.39r).

represented a complete list of the Great Seljuq sultans known to twentieth-century historians.¹⁸⁹ Yet Iqbāl, as well as Richard, did not discuss the possible rationales of this layout or the question of whether some finishing touches are missing from the manuscript.¹⁹⁰

The main data of the volume's history are provided by its dated colophon and the three Muslim owners. Ilyās b. °Abd Allāh dated the colophon 17 April 1238.¹⁹¹ Unfortunately, he did not record where he finished the copy, and his *nisba* al-Qūnawī, indicating a link to Konya, the capital of the Rum Seljuqs between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries, is an unpointed addition by a later hand.¹⁹² Since Rāwandī dedicated

189. Rāwandī: *Rāḥat*: 85–86, especially 85 notes 1, 5, and 10; because of the disagreement with Rāwandī, Iqbāl presents the fifteen sultans in two sections: one sultan is succeeded by a list of fourteen sultans. Compare the eighteen sultans listed by Bosworth, *New Islamic Dynasties*: 185–186.

190. I am not aware of any research on the inclusion of genealogical tables in the opening chapters of Persian and Ottoman chronicles: Julie Scott Meisami does not consider the manuscripts of her sources in *Persian Historiography*, while Sholeh A. Quinn discusses Safavid genealogy without examining how they are displayed in the manuscripts: *Historical Writing*: 83–86. However, a cursory glance at a few manuscripts suggests that such tables might have been used as orientation device as well as visual representation of genealogical claims and traditions. Manuscripts of a fifteenth-century Ottoman translation of Rāwandī's historical section—Yazıcıoğlu's *Tawārīḥ-i āl-i Salḡūq* (Chronicles of the Seljuq People)—contain similarly spaced genealogical tables illustrated with the clans' *tamḡas*; for codicological description and plate from an undated codex in Leiden, see: Schmidt, *Catalogue*: 104–105 s.v. Cod. Or. 419; compare: Flemming, *Türkische Handschriften*: 77 s.v. 101. In contrast, two Persian fragments of the first volume of the *Ġāmī' al-tawārīḥ* by Rašīd al-Dīn Faḍl Allāh Ṭabīb (1247–1318), which also deals with Seljuq history, contain genealogical information on the Oghuz clans, but *tamḡas* are only mentioned in one manuscript and neither scribe arranged these data in a table or grid: London, British Library, MS pers. Or. 2927: fol.13v; and London, British Library, MS pers. Or. 2885: fol.13r–14r. For other genealogical tables in other manuscripts of this chronicle, compare the illustrated genealogy of Chinese emperors and Jewish kings in the Arabic manuscript, that is now in the Khalili collection: Blair, *Compendium*: fol.249r–257v and fol.295. For *tamḡas* and their first documentation in the *Dīwān luḡāt al-turk* (List of the Turks' Words) by Maḥmūd al-Kāšḡarī (eleventh century), as well as their occurrence in later Islamic historiography, see: Leiser, "Tamḡa."

191. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: "tammat fī ḡurraṭ Ramaḍān sanat ḥams ṭalaṭīn sittami'a fī yadai-... al-ḥaḡḡ Ilyās b. °Abd Allāh al-ḥāfiẓ al-Qūnawī" (467).

192. The difficulties of deciphering the scribe's name were first stated by Browne, "Account": 887. Iqbāl observed that not only the unpointed *nisba* Qūnawī, but also the honorifics *al-ḥaḡḡ* and *al-ḥāfiẓ* had been added later: Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: 468 note 5. The conjecture Qūnyawī has been suggested by A.H. Morton in

his miscellany to Kai Ḥusrau, a sultan of the Rum Seljuqs (ruled 1192–1197 and 1205–1211), Alexander Morton and Richard speculated that the *nisba* Qūnawī suggests that Ilyās b. ʿAbd Allāh copied the manuscript in Konya, perhaps even from Rāwandī’s autograph.¹⁹³ This speculation is undoubtedly very elegant and probable, yet there is no evidence that a dedication manuscript was in fact copied by Rāwandī and then reached its dedicatee in Konya. Nor does this speculation account for the equally reasonable possibility that Ilyās b. ʿAbd Allāh retained his *nisba* Qūnawī, if it was ever his to begin with, after having moved from Konya to another city or court where he copied Rāwandī’s *Rāḥat*.

Three owners inscribed themselves on the manuscript’s first and last pages.¹⁹⁴ On fol.1r, *ṣaḥib-i dīwān* ʿAlā al-Dīn left an undated ex-libri. Richard identified this official, the head of the chancery, as the famous Mongol administrator, historian, and bibliophile ʿAlā’ al-Dīn ʿAṭā Malik Ğuwainī (1226–1283).¹⁹⁵ The *tuğrā* of the Ottoman sultan Beyazıd II (ruled 1481–1512) is visible twice, on fol.1r and 179v.¹⁹⁶ The otherwise

Swietochowski, *Illustrated Poetry*: 53.

193. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: “u-ğaraḍ azīn mağmūʿe dīkr-i alqāb u-nām u-nasab-i šarīf-i pādīšāh-i ʿādil ... Abū al-Fatāḥ Kaiḥusrau... ast” (64). A.H. Morton in Swietochowski, *Illustrated Poetry*: 53; and Richard, *Splendeurs persans*: 42 s.v. 8; compare: Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: X note 3.

194. Richard, *Splendeurs persans*: 42 s.v. 8; compare: Richard, “Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, MS supplément pers.1314.”

195. Unfortunately, Richard does not mention whether there are other ex-libris by Ğuwainī, that are similar, or even identical, to this one. Otherwise, after the execution of Rašīd al-Dīn Faḍl Allāh (1247–1318) the Ilkhanid administrator Ibn al-Nizām (c.1280–1342), whose *al-ʿUrāda fī al-ḥikāya al-Salğūqīya* has been identified as a revised version of the *Rāḥat*’s historical section, became known as ʿĀlā’ al-Dīn Muḥammad: Ibn al-Nizām, *ʿUrāda*: XIX.

196. That the manuscript had been owned by an Ottoman sultan was already observed by Blochet, *Catalogue des manuscrits persans*: 277 s.v. 438.

unknown Ḥāğğ Muṣṭafā Ṣadaqī added his seal, dated 1765, to the names of the volume's previous owners. The first two identifications suggest that between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries the modest manuscript—especially if compared with the luxurious codices produced for noble patrons—was owned by members of the ruling elite, and moved from Baghdad to Istanbul. The obscure third owner is important because his ownership documents that imperial libraries withdrew volumes, even though, unfortunately, the reason of withdrawal was not recorded in the manuscript itself.

II. f. Selective readings of the *Rāḥat*

The meager data for the transmission of the unique *Rāḥat* manuscript convey the impression of a rare work. However, rarity does not necessarily imply failure with the intended audiences. How many manuscript copies are necessary to validate the conclusion that a work was a bestseller or left on the shelf? The twentieth-century attitude that measures a publishing success by the size of the number of books sold—and by the number of books read—does not apply to the manuscript age, where books were a rare commodity and much fewer people could read. Moreover, Rāwandī designed the *Rāḥat* for a small, select audience among the Rum Seljuqs, and men like ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Ġuwainī and Beyazīd II, who later owned the *Rāḥat* manuscript, belonged to the same social group, though within the framework of other ruling families. Rarity thus only indicates that the work did not cross over the boundaries that separated the courts from the rest of society. That neither Rāwandī nor the *Rāḥat* is included in any biographical dictionary or book catalogue appears then as less critical evidence, especially if seen together with the indirect evidence for the work's transmission.

Although the complete miscellany did not seem to attract readers between the beginning of the thirteenth and the second half of the sixteenth century, the institutional history of the Great Seljuq sultanate¹⁹⁷ is preserved in revised Persian versions and excerpts, as well as in an Ottoman translation. The context of this indirect transmission are either individual works or comprehensive chronicles, and both point to the same group of readers as the *Rāḥat* manuscript: members and associates of the ruling elites. Aside from this historical focus, the reception of the work seems to have included some of its poetry. So far, a panegyric *qaṣīda*, one of the many poems in the *Rāḥat*,¹⁹⁸ has been identified in an anthology of Persian poetry. Unfortunately, at the current state of research on miscellanies and anthologies, it is impossible to gauge whether this case is just an exception. With the beginning of the seventeenth century, the the partial reception of the *Rāḥat* came to a halt. In an arresting accordance with the premodern Islamic reception of the *Rāḥat*, in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Europe the research on the miscellany has also concentrated on its institutional history of the Great Seljuq sultanate. When Schefer published his discovery of the *Rāḥat* and Edward G. Browne (1862–1926) arranged its critical edition, Schefer and Browne, as well as Iqbāl, were excited that the thirteenth-century manuscript of the *Rāḥat* contained so much information on the eleventh- and twelfth-century sultanate of the Great Seljuqs.¹⁹⁹ The scarcity of

197. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: 85–405 (fol.37v–157r).

198. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: 458–459 (fol.175v–176r).

199. Houtsma, “Ueber eine türkische Chronik”: 371 note 4; Schefer, “Tableau du règne”: 3–4; Browne, “Account”: 567–569; and Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: X and XXI–XXVI. However, Schefer considered the *Rāḥat* an important document also for the relationship between Persian and Arabic in twelfth-century Iran: “j’ai dû aussi renoncer, à mon très grand regret, à donner la traduction des vers et des adages composés ou cités par l’auteur à l’appui de chaque fait. Ces maximes sont soigneusement traduites en persan, et elles confirment ce fait... que, depuis le XII^e siècle de notre ère, la langue arabe avait cessé d’être généralement comprise

contemporary sources for the Great Seljuqs transformed a unique miscellany into an important document of pre-Mongol Persian historiography.²⁰⁰

To elucidate why medieval Islamic historians and nineteenth- and twentieth-century scholars alike focused on the miscellany's historical component, the *Rāḥat* must be placed within the context of the few preserved sources for regional politics in western Iran between the eleventh and twelfth centuries. In his introduction, Rāwandī acknowledged Ṣāḥib al-Dīn Nīshāpūrī (died c.1184) as his source for the Great Seljuqs, though Rāwandī did not ascribe a work with a specific title to Nīshāpūrī.²⁰¹ Rāwandī's short comment on Nīshāpūrī is the only preserved information about this otherwise obscure man²⁰² to whom the Ilkhanid historian Ḥamd Allāh Mustaufī Qazwīnī (c.1281–after 1339) and the Timurid historian Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū (died 1430) ascribed a Seljuq chronicle on which they based their reports on the Great Seljuqs, making it thus a central work of Persian historiography.²⁰³ Yet Nīshāpūrī's Seljuq chronicle was long assumed lost, and only in 1953 did Ismāʿīl Afšār publish a version of the work, based on a

dans la Perse et dans la Transoxiane.” (Schefer, “Tableau du règne”: 13).

200. Rypka, *History*: 442; Luther, “Islamic Rhetoric”: 95; Hillenbrand, “Rāwandī,” and Meisami, *Persian Historiography*: 236–237 and 254. Some scholars, however, do not count the *Rāḥat* among pre-Mongol Persian historiography; for example, the miscellany is not mentioned by Bosworth, “The Persian Contribution.”

201. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: “hamīn tāriḫ-hā bi-ʿahd-i ḥudāwand-i ʿālam Ṭuḡril b. Arslān b. Ṭuḡril raḥīma-hū Allāh Ṣāḥib al-Dīn Nīshāpūrī ke ustād-i sultān-i Arslān u-Masʿūd būd u-ḥ”iṣ duʿāgūyī-yi daulat nibište būd” *Ṣāḥib al-Dīn Nīshāpūrī, who had been the teacher of the sultans Arslān and Masʿūd, and the petitioner to the state* [i.e., Rāwandī] wrote the very same stories up to the reign of the monarch of the world Ṭuḡril b. Arslān b. Ṭuḡril—may God have mercy upon him (64–65). However, in this passage Rāwandī only acknowledged the death of sultan Ṭuḡril III in 1194 and did not add an eulogy to Nīshāpūrī's name. For another, though unexplained, suggestion of Nīshāpūrī's date of death, see: Meisami, *Persian Historiography*: 255.

202. Bosworth, “Nīshāpūrī.”

203. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: XXIX–XXXIII; and Bosworth, “Nīshāpūrī.”

complete manuscript dated 1581 and a fifteenth-century fragment.²⁰⁴ As the contemporary evidence for the Great Seljuqs is extremely scarce and identified manuscripts of the *Salġūqnāme* (Book of the Seljuqs) are only fifteenth- and sixteenth-century copies of the work, the thirteenth-century manuscript of the *Rāḥat* constitutes the oldest known witness to the text of Nīšāpūrī's Seljuq chronicle.²⁰⁵

When Iqbāl prepared the *Rāḥat*'s critical edition, he analyzed the chapters about Seljuq history in Persian and Ottoman chronicles to establish who among later historians had adapted the miscellany. Iqbāl analyzed vocabularies and styles to deduce philological arguments for answers to the question of whether Rāwandī's institutional history of the Great Seljuq sultanate or Nīšāpūrī's chronicle were the source of these later works.²⁰⁶ His philological arguments were based on the observation that the first Islamic historiography in Persian was written in a straightforward manner, thus appearing to present a clear historical record, whereas after the Mongol conquest the rhetorical exuberance of the Persian chancery style seemed to obfuscate any functional data.²⁰⁷ Comparing texts, Iqbāl

204. Nīšāpūrī, *Salġūqnāme*: 8. For a negative assessment of this edition, compare: Cahen, "Historiography": 73; Bosworth, "Nīshāpūrī," and Nīšāpūrī, *History of the Seljuq*: ix.

205. A.H. Morton is currently preparing a new edition of the *Salġūqnāme*: Morton, "Salġūqnāma;" compare: Nīšāpūrī, *History of the Seljuq Turks*: viii–ix. Morton claims that a fifteenth- or sixteenth-century fragment with an anonymous history of the Seljuqs is a copy of Nīšāpūrī's original work (London, Royal Asiatic Society, MS pers. 22 (b); compare: Morley, *Descriptive Catalogue*: 133 s.v. CXXXVIII). In his *stemma*, Morton further postulates, first, the existence of two lost intermediaries of the *Salġūqnāme* and, second, the existence of a *Ta'rīḥ-i Salġūqīyān* by Rāwandī, that was preserved as a unique copy in an anonymous addendum to a fifteenth-century manuscript of the *Tā'rīḥ-i ġahān gušāy* by 'Alā' al-Dīn 'Aṭā Malik Ġuwainī (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, MS supplément pers. 1556: fol.231v–fol.261r). I am greatly indebted to Tim Stanley for a copy of Morton's "Salġūqnāma," a handout from a workshop conducted by the Royal Asiatic Society in Spring 2001.

206. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: XXXIII–XXXVIII; Iqbāl, for instance, argued that similar passages in the *Rāḥat* and the *Nusah-i ġahān ārā* prove that Ḥamd Allāh "had it before him while writing" (XXXVI).

207. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: "a clear and simple style, typical of the pre-Mongol Persian writings" (XXI–XXII). The assumption that an unadorned style was typical for Persian historiography before the Mongol conquest leads to the condemnation of the later chancery style by eminent medieval historians, such as Bosworth,

concluded that in five chronicles, compiled between the beginning of the thirteenth and the second half of the sixteenth century, authors had worked from the *Rāḥat*: (1) Rašīd al-Dīn Faḍl Allāh (1247–1318) in his *Ġāmiʿ al-tawārīḥ* (Compendium of Chronicles);²⁰⁸ (2) Ibn al-Nizām al-Ḥusainī al-Yazdī (c.1280–1342) in his *ʿUrāḍa fī al-ḥikāya al-Salġūqīya* (Gift Concerning the Seljuq Story);²⁰⁹ (3) Yazıcıoğlu Ali (fifteenth century) in his *Tawārīḥ-i āl-i Salġūq* (Chronicles of the Seljuq People);²¹⁰ (4) the unknown author of a unique addendum to the *Tāʾrīḥ-i ġahān gušāy* (Chronicle of the World-Conqueror) by ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn ʿAṭā Malik Ġuwainī, preserved in a fifteenth-century manuscript;²¹¹ and (5) Qādī Aḥmad Ġifārī Qazwīnī (c.1504–1568) in his *Nusaḥ-i ġahān ārā* (World-Adorning Texts).²¹² Unfortunately, the evidence is nonetheless equivocal, complicating all efforts to isolate traces of a twelfth-century chronicle in fifteenth-century manuscripts. None of

“The Persian Contribution”: “Writing his history in a tediously florid and inflated Persian style, so different from the simplicity of that of his predecessors, Juwaynī incorporated the chancery style of Persian, with its full battery of rhetorical devices, into Persian historiography, thereby influencing this genre of writing for centuries to come and making history an arcane preserve for the restricted class of ʿulamāʾ and *kuttāb*, a science to be savored for its fine style rather than as a means of the intelligible communication of information.” (235–236).

208. For the most recent analysis of the work’s manuscript tradition that is further complicated through the parallel transmission of Arabic and Persian versions, see: Blair, *Compendium*: 16–36.

209. London, British Library, MS pers. Add. 22,695; compare: Rieu, *Catalogue*: 848–850 s.v. Add. 22,695. For the manuscript tradition, see: Ibn al-Nizām, *ʿUrāḍa*: VI and IX–X; and for the relationship to the *Rāḥat*, see: XVIII–XIX.

210. Leiden, University Library – Legatum Warnerianum, MS turk. Or. 491; for identified mss. of this work, see: Flemming, *Türkische Handschriften*: 78 s.v. 101.

211. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, MS supplément pers. 1556: fol.231v–fol.261r. As already mentioned, Morton considers this addendum—sometimes called *Risāle-yi Ġuwainī*—a previously unknown *Tāʾrīḥ-i Salġūqīyān* by Rāwandī: Morton, “*Salġūqnāma*.” Other suggestions have been offered by Muḥammad Qazwīnī, who identified it as an abridgment of the *Rāḥat* (Ġuwainī, *Tāʾrīḥ-i ġahān gušāy*, 1: LXXIII and LXXV), and Allin Luther, who regarded it as Ġuwainī’s abridgment of the *Salġūqnāma* (Nīšāpūrī, *History of the Seljuq Turks*: 15–16 and 177).

212. Quinn, *Historical Writing*: 17 and 159 notes 26–30.

these five authors mentioned Rāwandī or his miscellany, but all manuscripts postdate the *Rāḥat*'s manuscript, and therefore also the alleged text of the *Salḡūqnāme*, by at least a century. Concerning the language of chronicles, *claritas*, as well as *obscuritas*, is a rhetorical style in its own right,²¹³ so that a fifteenth-century author mastered the linguistic means to edit and rewrite his twelfth-century source in either style according to his own intentions.

Seen against the background of the known manuscript tradition, it is at this point impossible, with our current knowledge of Persian manuscripts and Persian historiography, to settle the philological question of how the text of the *Rāḥat*'s institutional history of the Great Seljuq sultanate is related to the text of Nīšāpūrī's chronicle.²¹⁴ Yet the occurrence of excerpts on the Great Seljuq sultanate in five later chronicles are important pieces of evidence for the audiences that were interested in the Great Seljuqs. Unlike Rāwandī, none of the later authors supplemented an institutional history with non-historiographical writings. This suggests, on the one hand, that Rāwandī's editorial decisions about the contents of his miscellany, mixing recent and contemporary politics with chapters about the courtly life style, were too idiosyncratic to

213. The assumption that a simple style is written without the use of any rhetorical devices is derived from an understanding of rhetoric according to which the construction of structures—i.e., syntax—is a non-rhetorical use of language, while the rhetorical use of language is limited to verbal ornament—i.e., figures of speech; for *claritas* see: White, *Tropics of Discourse*: 134; and Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric*: 111, and *passim*.

214. The unsolved mystery of what Rāwandī did, or did not do, to Nīšāpūrī's chronicle is also the context of Meisami's efforts to rehabilitate the *Rāḥat*, defending Rāwandī against charges of excessive use of rhetoric: Meisami, *Persian Historiography*: 237–238; in addition to her discussion of both the *Salḡūqnāme* and the *Rāḥat* in this monograph (229–234 and 237–256), see also her articles “The Historian and the Poet”: 98 and 119–121; “History”: 26–29; “Rāwandī's ‘Rāḥat al-ṣudūr’,” and “The *Šāh-nāme*”: 267–273. But Meisami—unlike Morton—does not consider the manuscripts, accepting Afšār's version of the *Salḡūqnāme* at face value. Her comparisons between the *Salḡūqnāme* and the *Rāḥat* are based on Afšār's text only.

remain attractive to later readers. The dedicatees of the later chronicles, on the other hand, indicate that until the sixteenth century such institutional history was of interest to ruling Mongol, Iranian, and Turkish elites alike, as is already documented by two identified owners of the *Rāḥat* manuscript: ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Ğuwainī and Beyazīd II. The renowned *Ġāmi‘ al-tawārīḥ* was dedicated by Rašīd al-Dīn to the Ilkhanid khan Maḥmūd Ġāzān (ruled 1295–1304).²¹⁵ In contrast, no patron or dedicatee is mentioned in the *‘Urāda* itself, though Karl Süssheim (1878–1947), who prepared the work’s critical edition, assumed that Ibn al-Nizām dedicated the work to an official at the court of Maḥmūd Ġāzān’s successor, khan Öljeytū (ruled 1304–1316).²¹⁶ After the Ilkhanids, both the Ottomans and the Safavids considered the sultanate of the Great Seljuqs as one of their predecessors. The otherwise obscure fifteenth-century author Yazıcıoğlu dedicated his Ottoman *Tawārīḥ-i āl-i Salḡūq* to sultan Murad II (ruled 1421–1451),²¹⁷ whereas Qādī Aḥmad dedicated his *Nusah-i ḡahān ārā* to the Safavid shah Ṭahmāsb.²¹⁸ After these two historians, there are no further traces that any historian consulted a twelfth-century source for the Great Seljuqs, be it the text by Nīšāpūrī or Rāwandī, perhaps because the politics of the Great Seljuqs’ reign in eleventh- and twelfth-century western Iran was now available in authoritative Ottoman and Safavid chronicles. That in the second half of the eighteenth century the *Rāḥat* manuscript was no longer claimed as

215. Morley, *Descriptive Catalogue*: 3 s.v. I.

216. Ibn al-Nizām, *‘Urāda*: XVIII–XIX, especially XIX note 1.

217. Flemming, *Türkische Handschriften*: 77 s.v. 101, compare: Schmidt, *Catalogue*: 104 s.v. Cod. Or. 419.

218. Quinn, *Historical Writing*: 17.

property by an Ottoman sultan supports this conclusion. The imperial library withdrew the thirteenth-century manuscript of a work that had been superseded by more recent works, suggesting a collection policy that was untouched by antiquarian, or even historicist, considerations.

As mentioned above, the selective reading of the *Rāḥat* was not completely restricted to its institutional history of Great Seljuq politics. Rāwandī incorporated a panegyric poem about his dedicatee Kai Ḥusrau into the *ḥātimat-i kitāb*.²¹⁹ Iqbāl already noticed that Rāwandī here revised for his own purposes a poem that Šaraf al-Dīn Šufurwe (fl. 1161–1186) had written for the Great Seljuq sultan Ṭuḡril III b. Arslān (ruled 1176–1194).²²⁰ Morton has recently called attention to a third version of this poem—now identified as Rāwandī’s and dedicated to sultan Sulaimān Šāh—that was included in the *Mu’nis al-aḥrār fī daqā’iq al-aš‘ār* (Free Men’s Companion about the Subtleties of Poems),²²¹ a fourteenth-century anthology of Persian poetry compiled by Muḥammad b. Badr al-Dīn Ġāḡarmī, the otherwise unattested son of the panegyrist Badr al-Dīn

219. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: 457–467 (fol.175v–179r); the poem of twenty-two distichs is a *muṣammat*, divided into *maṭla‘* and five stanzas with the rhyme scheme aaaab, and follows on p.458–459 (fol.175v–176r).

220. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: 458 note 1. For 1204 as Šufurwe’s date of death, see: Browne, *Literary History*, 2: 540. But for the problems of actually identifying Šaraf al-Dīn Šufurwe among the members of a family of Ḥanafite theologians in Isfahan, compare: de Blois, “*Šufurwa*.”

221. A.H. Morton in Swietochowski, *Illustrated Poetry*: 53–55 and 58–61. Morton identified this Sulaimān Šāh as the Rum Seljuq sultan Sulaimān II b. Qiliğ Arslān (ruled 1192–1204) and did not discuss whether the Great Seljuq sultan Sulaimān Šāh b. Muḥammad I (ruled 1160–1061) presents another possible honoree (*mamdūh*) of this panegyric. However, the poem could also have originated as a generic poetic exercise in praise of the biblical king Solomon, ruling over man and harpy as well as demon and fairy, because in Ġāḡarmī’s version the first two distichs are: “pīš-i sulṭān-and dar firmān-i barī / ādamī u-baḥrī u-dīw u-parī // ḥusrau-i ‘ādil Sulaimānšāh ke yāft / tāğ u-taht u-rāyat u-anguštārī //” (58 lines 1-2; compare: Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: 458 lines 16-17).

Ġāğarmī (died 1287).²²² Badr al-Dīn Ġāğarmī enjoyed the patronage of Šams al-Dīn Ġuwainī (died 1284), who like his famous brother °Alā' al-Dīn Ġuwainī worked in the Mongol administration. The *Mu'nis al-aḥrār* has been preserved in an illustrated manuscript whose colophon is dated 1341.²²³ This highly unusual codex is possibly Ġāğarmī's autograph and was perhaps copied and illustrated in Isfahan. The manuscript raises numerous philological and art-historical questions about Rāwandī's appropriation of Šufurwe's poem and Ġāğarmī's decision to illustrate just one of its thirty chapters with miniatures.²²⁴ Nonetheless, the poem's ascription to Rāwandī suggests that the *Rāḥat*, though perhaps in a different version,²²⁵ was accessible to Ilkhanid functionaries who also knew that the miscellany's institutional history of Great Seljuq politics doubled as an anthology of Persian poetry.²²⁶ The panegyric poem serves then as another piece of

222. A.H. Morton in Swietochowski, *Illustrated Poetry*: 49–51 and 56; compare: Qazwīnī, “Account”: 97–98.

223. For a detailed description of the manuscript, as well as the pages with the illustrated panegyric, see: Stefano Carboni in Swietochowski, *Illustrated Poetry*: 8–23 and 26–37 s.v 2-4.

224. In the unique manuscript, the introduction is followed by a list of the “names of poets and distinguished people about whom notices are given in this anthology” (Qazwīnī, “Account”: 105). Unfortunately, neither Rāwandī nor Šufurwe made that list.

225. For the argument that an earlier version of the *Rāḥat*, not yet dedicated to Kai Ḥusrau, was independently circulated and thus preserved because Ġāğarmī's version of this poem is dedicated to sultan Sulaimān Šāh, see: A.H. Morton in Swietochowski, *Illustrated Poetry*: “The version dedicated to Sulaymanshāh that appears in the *Mu'nis al-aḥrār* ... produced, it appears, when Rāwandī was considering seeking the patronage of Sulaymanshāh. We do not know whether it was ever incorporated into his earlier recension of the *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr*.” (54) Nonetheless, Iqbāl seems to have been the first to suggest that Rāwandī had originally planned to dedicate his miscellany to Sulaimān II, the brother of Kai Ḥusrau: Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: XIX–XXI.

226. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: “tārīḥ-i pādīšāhī u-ā'in-i sulṭanat-i āl-i Salḡūq bar sabīl-i iḥtišār bigūyam u-dīkr-i šu'arā-yi muta'ahḥir u-šī'r-hā'ī ke dar ḥaḍrat-i īšān ḥ'wānde and biyāram” *let me briefly tell the history of the reign and the institution of the sultanate of the Seljuq family. Let me recall the contemporary poets and the poems that they recited for these excellencies* (63); for a justification of not always citing complete panegyrics, compare: 193 lines 6-11.

evidence for the *Rāḥat*'s circulation in southern Iraq and western Iran in court-related circles between the 1230s and 1340s.

II. g. Audiences and languages

Comparing the preserved manuscripts of the *Muḥāḍarāt* and the *Rāḥat* illustrates that the sheer number of preserved manuscripts does not necessarily equal a better knowledge of the manuscripts' readers and owners. The single manuscript of the *Rāḥat* attests that Rāwandī's idea of his audience was nonetheless realistic. The miscellany was dedicated to a Rum Seljuq sultan, and the manuscript was for some time owned by an Ottoman sultan. In contrast, the *Muḥāḍarāt* manuscripts—as far as identified, examined, and described in catalogues—do not show any traces of having been of interest to elite audiences. Rāḡib did not identify a specific patron, and hence it seems appropriate that so far no manuscript could be directly connected with a high-ranking owner. This observation suggests that from the start Rāḡib designed the anthology as a pragmatic textbook for a non-elite, professional audience, whose social make-up, unfortunately, is completely unknown to us. Non-elite book culture in premodern Islamic societies has not been studied at all. The copies that survived in Istanbul and Meshed as part of the *waqfs* established by Köprülüzade Fazıl Ahmet Paşa and Nādir Šāh Afšār do not contradict this conclusion because their ownership can be explained without assuming that the *Muḥāḍarāt* was considered of ideological value to the ruling elites. Fazıl Ahmet Paşa was a patron of scholars and the arts, as well as bibliophile who acquired manuscripts

from a book collector's viewpoint.²²⁷ Among the ten *Muḥāḍarāt* copies in the Köprülü Library there are three fragments dated between 1388 and 1510,²²⁸ and a complete copy dated 1391.²²⁹ Today these four copies are the only preserved dated *Muḥāḍarāt* manuscripts from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Otherwise, the *Muḥāḍarāt*'s popularity with non-elite audiences does not exclude the possibility that the anthology was also used to teach literary Arabic to members of the ruling elites. In 1874, a member of the Qajar family bought a complete manuscript of the *Muḥāḍarāt*, which had been copied in 1860, and studied the anthology as a compilation of samples of correct literary Arabic.²³⁰

Different target audiences are also indicated by the different languages of the *Muḥāḍarāt* and the *Rāḥat*. In the tenth and eleventh centuries, the Shi'ite Buyids did not challenge the supremacy of Arab-Islamic culture; hence, the dominant status of Arabic was not in doubt. The *Muḥāḍarāt* is an Arabic anthology that reflected the Arab-Islamic literary conventions and traditions in its introduction and organization. Yet the rise of literary Persian continued under the Sunnite Great Seljuqs whose bureaucracy was run by both Arabs and Iranians. The *Rāḥat* is a Persian miscellany permeated with verses in both Persian and Arabic, secular and Koranic, and organized according to Persian literary

227. Gökbilgin and Trepp, "Köprülü": 261.

228. Istanbul, Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS arab. Fazıl Ahmet Paşa 1378; Istanbul, Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS arab. Fazıl Ahmet Paşa 1380; Istanbul, Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS arab. Fazıl Ahmet Paşa 1379; and Istanbul, Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS arab. Fazıl Ahmet Paşa 1375.

229. Istanbul, Köprülü Kütüphanesi, MS arab. Fazıl Ahmet Paşa 1371 (1).

230. Tabriz, Kitābhāne-yi millī, MS arab. 2559. For the uses to which Nādir Mīrzā Qāḡār, whose honorific was "ṣāhib-i iḥtiyār," put the *Muḥāḍarāt*, see the manuscript's codicological description: Yūnusī, *Fihrist*, 1: 1243–1244 s.v. 2559.

conventions. The manuscript evidence suggests that in turn the languages determined how later audiences used the works. Until the nineteenth century the *Muḥāḍarāt* was a recognized textbook of Arabic for speakers of Ottoman and Persian, and the anthology has remained popular with Arab audiences until today. In contrast, the currently known evidence suggests that the *Rāḥat* was rarely copied word by word, because in the extant versions of Rāwandī's miscellany the Persian text was revised, as well as rewritten or translated. This observation attests that, by the eleventh century, literary Arabic had become a relatively stable medium, whereas late-twelfth-century Persian seemed already outdated to early-fourteenth-century readers.

Those different audiences provide an explanation of whether and how the *Muḥāḍarāt* and the *Rāḥat* were mentioned in biographical dictionaries and book catalogues. On the one hand, the *Rāḥat*'s audience was a small, select group of courtiers and functionaries, and there is no trace that another work by Rāwandī has been preserved. Bibliographical dictionaries and book catalogues preserved immense amounts of data about Islamic professionals—from saints and jurists to poets and calligraphers—but typically their authors did not scrutinize a sultan's personnel. There are no biographical dictionaries that survey the entourage of a ruler. On the other hand, Rāḡib is also considered the author of a number of popular works about Koran exegesis that first gained him recognition in *tafsīrs* and mention in biographical dictionaries and later the *Muḥāḍarāt* was added to the list of his works. It appears that a common characteristic of all works ascribed to Rāḡib is that they aimed at professional audiences who were not necessarily related to the courts.

Although both the *Muḥāḍarāt* and the *Rāḥat* originated in pre-Mongol Iran, later Iranian audiences valued the two compilations differently, and this appreciation was independent of the works' languages. In the late tenth or early eleventh century, Rāḡib wrote numerous works about dogmatics and Koran exegesis, yet he kept his *Muḥāḍarāt* so neutral that the anthology cannot be pinpointed as an expression of any specific dogmatic position. Toward the end of the twelfth century, Rāwandī argued in the *Rāḥat* for the reconstitution of Ḥanafite rule over western Iran. After the sixteenth century, with the emergence of a Safavid agenda that linked Safavid identity to the Imāmīya, Shi'ite scholars began to interpret the neutral text of the Arabic *Muḥāḍarāt* as ambiguous, speculating about Rāḡib's Shi'ite, maybe even Imamite, affiliations, while the Sunni author of the Persian *Rāḥat* whose institutional history covered the sultanate of the Turkish Great Seljuqs, was left to oblivion. In the first half of the twentieth century Muḥammad Qazwīnī dutifully noticed Schefer's discovery, but his short note about the *Rāḥat* did not even contain its author's name.²³¹

The reception of the *Muḥāḍarāt* and the *Rāḥat* outside the Iranian world seems to further corroborate how the authors had originally launched their works: an anthology for professional audiences outside the courts and a miscellany for the member of a ruling family. *Muḥāḍarāt* manuscripts circulated between Tehran and Istanbul, but knowledge of the *Rāḥat* seems to have been limited to a few specialists with a direct interest in imperial administration and politics, be they Mongol, Turkish, or Iranian. The limited

231. Qazwīnī, *Yād dāšt-hā*, 5: 2 s.v. *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr*. The posthumous notes do not contain a separate entry for Rāwandī.

circulation of the *Rāḥat* corresponds to the absence of any discussion of Rāwandī's bonafides. There is also no evidence that despite the popularity of Rāḡib's works, scholars outside Iran were particularly concerned with Rāḡib's dogmatic allegiances. In the fifteenth century, when in Cairo Suyūṭī was the first to mention the *Muḥāḍarāt* in a biographical dictionary, he mentioned his own confusion over whether Rāḡib was a Muṣṭazilite or Sunnite.²³² Suyūṭī's treatment of Rāḡib follows from a strategy of self-assured and relaxed sovereignty: The Arabic anthology is, of course, part of the Arab-Islamic heritage so that unanswerable questions—such as, where the *Muḥāḍarāt* actually originated and whether its obscure author was Arab, Sunnite, or other—are beside the point. Subsequently, neither Ottomans nor Christian and Sunnite Arabs have seriously discussed Rāḡib's alleged Shi'ite affiliations. The same attitude can be observed in recent research on the *Muḥāḍarāt*. Thomas, largely relying on Rowson's synopsis of Rāḡib's life and works in the second edition of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*,²³³ briefly mused about Rāḡib's "centrist approach"²³⁴ without even considering the Shi'ite efforts to claim Rāḡib as one of their own. Despite the opposing conclusions, this Sunnite approach to the *Muḥāḍarāt*—be their representative western or indigenous Arabists—has with its Shi'ite mirror image in common that both sides proceed without examining the circulation and reception of the anthology.

232. Suyūṭī, *Buḡya*: 296.

233. Rowson, "al-Rāḡhib al-Iṣfahānī."

234. Thomas, "Concept of *Muḥāḍara*": 155.

III Biographies of textbook writers: Authority and authorship

Der Historiker kann und soll nicht anders urteilen als von der Höhe seines Beobachtungszeitpunktes im Nachhinein. Aber er muß wissen, daß Geschichte anders *gelebt* wurde. Nur so wird er früheren Generationen gerecht werden.

Arnold Esch, "Beobachtungen zu Stand und Tendenzen der Mediävistik"

Medieval Iran before the Mongol conquest was a factionalized society, in which Iranians, Arabs, Turks, and Kurds lived as Muslims, Zoroastrians, Jews, and Christians under the rule of Muslim elites. This ethnic and religious diversity implies the coexistence of multiple languages, yet the role and importance of Arabic as the language of the Islamic conquest, as well as the circumstances of the rise of Persian are not fully understood.¹ Moreover, comprehensive answers to these sociolinguistic questions are problematic because they concern the highly contentious relationship between the Arab-Islamic and Persian-Islamic civilizations after the Islamic conquest of the seventh century.² Since the ninth century, Iranian and Turkish dynasties had succeeded with the establishment of regional spheres of control and influence in the eastern half of the *umma*, successfully challenging the supremacy of the Abbasid caliphate, as well as establishing regional centers of learning and research. The eleventh and twelfth centuries were characterized

1. For the thesis that some time before the tenth century Persian-speaking *mawālī* established Persian as the *lingua franca* with the ruling non-Iranian elites, see: Frye, *Golden Age*: 16 and 173; compare: Bulliet, *Conversion*: 18 and 39; Choksy, *Conflict and Cooperation*: 142; and Meisami, *Persian Historiography*: 17–18. Meisami, however, presents Frye's position as a thesis, still open to discussion and modification.

2. In eighth- and ninth-century Arabic sources, the debate about difference, equality, or superiority between Arab and non-Arab tribes—*al-ʿArab wa-l-ʿAḡam*—was linked to the term *šuf ūb ūya* (Enderwitz, "*Šuf ūbiyya*": 513–514). Seen against the background of nationalist overtones of nineteenth- and twentieth-century interpretations of this debate, it is rather ironic that the patronage of the Turkish Ghaznavids was so important for the rise of so-called classical Persian literature. For the comparable efforts to enlist Persian painting for various nationalist causes, compare: Grabar, *Miniatures*: 3.

by growing political instability. The Abbasid caliphate faced severe difficulties in upholding its authority outside Baghdad and Iraq. Conversely, local dynasties established the economic framework necessary for court patronage that in turn led to the utilization of Persian as administrative language, replacing Arabic, and the sponsorship of so-called classical Persian literature.

Locating Rāḡib and Rāwandī more precisely within the intellectual circles of eleventh- and twelfth-century Iraq and Iran is impossible because the personal lives of Rāḡib and Rāwandī did not leave any traces in contemporary sources other than the works ascribed to them. The situation is further complicated by the wide range of cities and courts that competed with Baghdad and the Abbasid court. In addition, social mobility in premodern Islamic societies and the economic aspects of sponsoring, writing, and selling books remain to be studied in detail, so inferences about the authors' lives from data concerning the reception of their works cannot be anything other than more or less plausible speculation. Rāḡib is assumed to have lived in the first half of the eleventh century, and all works ascribed to him are written in literary Arabic. Rāwandī was active toward the end of the twelfth century, and his only literary work is a Persian miscellany permeated with Arabic quotes.³ Their names include *nisbas* that indicate ties to western Iran, as Iṣfahānī and Rāwandī refer to places in the western province Jibal: the regional center Isfahan and the small town Ravand, which is close to the city Kashan.

That Rāḡib and Rāwandī share the admittedly tenuous link to western Iran directs attention to the parallel uses of Arabic and Persian in medieval Iran, because Rāḡib and

3. Schefer, "Tableau du règne": "depuis le XII^e siècle de notre ère, la langue arabe avait, cessé d'être généralement comprise dans la Perse et dans la Transoxiane" (13).

Rāwandī did not compile their textbooks in the same language. This difference is crucial for the autobiographical data preserved in the works themselves. Although both textbooks originated within the context of an Islamic society in western Iran, the Arabic *Muḥāḍarāt* and the Persian *Rāḥat* preserved different information about the lives of their authors. The juxtaposition of the two miscellanies documents that Arabic and Persian provided their authors with distinct literary conventions of how to inscribe their names and personal histories into their works. In literary Arabic, the introduction did not allow for lengthy autobiographical statements.⁴ Rāḡib adhered to those conventions, and the short introduction of the *Muḥāḍarāt* is silent on its author's life.⁵ But in literary Persian, an author has the chance to present details about his personal situation because in the introduction the author is obliged to establish a link between himself and his patron.⁶ Rāwandī included in the *Rāḥat* an autobiographical statement of considerable length.⁷ The divergence is instructive because the distribution of personal information is the

4. For the basic topoi and their sequence, see above, chapter II, note 32.

5. Rāḡib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ed. Beirut, 1: 7–8. For the absence of personal data in Rāḡib's works in general, compare: Sārīsī, *Al-Rāḡib al-Isfahānī*. 32.

6. For autobiographical information about the author in Persian, as well as in Ottoman, historiography, see: Sultanov, "Structure": "The preface and the introduction contain information about the author, the name and character of his work, the motifs and circumstances impelling him to write, the time when the work was written and, often, a dedication." (16). Autobiographical statements also appear in works written in verse. For example, Rāwandī's contemporary Nizāmī (died c. 1209) included them in his epics (*maṭnawīs*) about Alexander the Great: "ḥasb-i ḥāl-i ḥ"iṣ u-guzaştan-i rüzgār" (Nizāmī, *Šarafnāme*: 79–83); and "dar sabab-i naẓm-i kitāb" (Nizāmī, *Iqbāl-nāme*: 52–62). For the personal statement (*ḥasb-i ḥāl*) in the Persian panegyric *qaṣʿida*, see: Glünz, "Poetic Traditions": 185–189. However, the relationship between the Persian *ḥasb-i ḥāl* and the Arabic boast (*faḥr*) remains to be studied. For the argument that the Persian literary conventions were ultimately derived from Arabic traditions, compare: Meisami, *Review of Historical Writing*: 724.

7. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: "ḍikr-i aḥwāl-i muṣannif-i kitāb" (39–56); "sabab-i tālīf-i īn kitāb" (57–63) and "fiḥrist-i kitāb" (63–68 and 457–459); and "ḍikr-i ḥ"āb" (459–464).

opposite of the quantity of data available for the reception of the textbooks. The forty-five identified Arabic manuscripts of the *Muḥāḍarāt* illustrate its circulation between the twelfth and nineteenth centuries, but they do not contribute any significant details to Rāḡib's biography. The example of the *Muḥāḍarāt* illustrates that within the literary Arabic tradition a scholar did not have to append a comprehensive resume to a work to become an author whose works were distributed through multiple copies. In contrast, Rāwandī's diffuse autobiographical sections appear as oddly inflated, if considered in connection with the very limited circulation of the unique *Rāḥat* manuscript.

The data for the lives of both Rāḡib and Rāwandī are scanty, yet they are preserved in different sources. Information about Rāḡib, collected by the later authors of biographical dictionaries and book catalogues, supplements references to Rāḡib made outside these bio-bibliographical reference works. This scatter of indirect information for Rāḡib's life in the first half of the eleventh century sharply contrasts with the single source for Rāwandī's life toward the end of the twelfth century. His own work, the *Rāḥat*, is the only source for his own life. But the analysis of this biographical evidence needs to consider also the economic context of the preserved data beyond the literary conventions of Arabic and Persian. In pre-Mongol Iran, men of letters were not necessarily independently wealthy, and the writing of books was not just the privilege of a few men with disposable income. Scholars had to sell their texts and other academic services to make a living. The *Muḥāḍarāt* and the *Rāḥat* are examples of compilations that were written for an audience other than their authors. Conversely, Rāḡib and Rāwandī designed the textbooks, as well as their appearances in them, with the obvious

strategic interest of reaching their intended readers and users.⁸ The modern western distinction between private lives and public roles applies also to the factionalized society of pre-Mongol Iran, even though the ways in which men and women negotiated public obligations and experienced private desires is still only insufficiently understood.⁹ Consequently, the data for the lives of Rāgīb and Rāwandī are not only scanty, they are also heterogeneous because they are gleaned from varied sources, each of which has its own agenda.

This heterogeneity poses an additional hermeneutic problem. Every interpretation of data begins with indispensable decisions about their hierarchical relationship concerning the temporal sequence of beginning and end and the logical distinction between cause and effect. These decisions are the implicit and unavoidable prerequisites for presenting heterogeneous data in writing, because writing does not allow for presenting varied data simultaneously. Conversely, the more heterogeneous the available data the more difficult it becomes to establish those hierarchical relationships that transform miscellaneous details into the conclusive sequence of a written interpretation.¹⁰

8. Todorov, *Conquest*: "We might suppose that in doing so he [i.e., Las Casas] is not sincere, ... but the thing is of little importance, not only because it is impossible to establish, but also because Las Casas's texts—i.e., what can function publicly—certainly say that there is a material advantage to be derived from colonization." (171). Compare Renato Rosaldo in Clifford and Marcus, *Writing culture*: "a tactic made familiar by Michel Foucault, the narrator invokes the will to truth in order to suppress the document's equally present will to power." (81).

9. Research on the social and cultural history of medieval Islamic societies, mostly based on texts considered poetry and fiction according to modern western criteria, seems influenced by both cultural anthropology and historical ethnology. For a concise summary of the heuristic and epistemological problems of research on social and cultural history from an anthropologist's viewpoint, see: Handler, "Cultural History."

10. For the deconstruction of the hermeneutic strategy to present hierarchical assumptions about the object of inquiry as its essential properties, see: Foucault, *Discipline*: "there may be a 'knowledge' of the body that is not exactly the science of its functioning, and a mastery of forces that is more than the ability to conquer

Constructing a definitive image of the lives of Rāḡib and Rāwandī in pre-Mongol Iran would necessitate a heavily allegorical interpretation of the meager data preserved for both men.¹¹ The analysis can thus not produce a truthful and true account of the personal lives of Rāḡib and Rāwandī. Yet it can document how scholars constructed from some popular ethical and linguistic works in Arabic an image of the author Rāḡib and of how Rāwandī presented himself as learned man to his noble patron. The juxtaposition of these disparate sources allows comparing various notions on authorship and book manufacture.

III. a. The emergence of Rāḡib's oeuvre

The indirect evidence for Rāḡib's person was introduced in the previous chapter to examine the circulation and use of the *Muḥāḡarāt*. Despite the limitations of the currently quite uneven knowledge of Islamic manuscript holdings across the world, comparing the identified preserved manuscripts, containing texts ascribed to Rāḡib, with references to his works in biographical dictionaries, book catalogues and other works

them: this knowledge and this mastery constitute what might be called the political technology of the body. ... the study of this micro-physics presupposes that the *power* exercised on the body is *conceived not as a property, but as a strategy*, that its *effects* of domination are attributed not to 'appropriation', but to dispositions, manoeuvres, tactics, techniques, functionings;" (26); italics mine. Compare Jacques Derrida's logic of the *supplément*, as concisely summarized by Barbara Johnson in Lentricchia and McLaughlin, *Critical Terms*: 45.

11. James Clifford in Clifford and Marcus, *Writing culture*: "Living does not easily organize itself into a continuous narrative." (106). For allegory as a hermeneutic strategy, see: "A recognition of allegory emphasizes the fact that realistic portraits, to the extent that they are 'convincing' or 'rich,' are extended metaphors, patterns of associations that point to coherent (theoretical, esthetic, moral) additional meanings. Allegory (more strongly than 'interpretation') calls to mind the poetic, traditional, cosmological nature of such writing. Allegory draws special attention to the narrative character of cultural representations, to the stories built into the representational process itself." (100).

reveals that more works ascribed to Rāḡib were in circulation than the few works linked to Rāḡib by indirect evidence.¹²

Table 6. Works ascribed to Rāḡib.

Preserved works, in which the ascription to Rāḡib is supported by indirect evidence

- | | |
|----------|--|
| (aḥlāq) | 1. al-Ḍarī'a ilā makārim al-šarī'a
(Guide to the Ennobling Qualities of the Islamic Law) |
| | 2. Tafṣīl al-naš'atāin wa-taḥṣīl al-sa'ādātāin
(The Explication of the Two Forms of Birth and the Acquisition of the Two Forms of Happiness) |
| (kalām) | 3. Taḥqīq al-bayān (Precise Eloquence) |
| (tafsīr) | 4. [Muqaddimat al-tafsīr = <u>no independent title transmitted</u>
(Introduction to the Koran commentary)] |
| | 5. Mufradāt al-fāḡ al-Qur'ān (Dictionary of the Koran) |
| | 6. Ġurraṭ al-tanzīl wa-durraṭ al-ta'wīl
(The New Moon of the Revelation and the Finest Pearl of its Explication) |
| (adab) | 7. Muḥāḡarāt al-udabā' wa-muḥāwarāt al-šu'arā' wa-l-bulaḡā'
(Conversations among Men of Letters and Debates between Men of Poetry and Rhetoric) |

Lost work, but mentioned as extant by Ibn Funduq (died 1170)

1. Kalimāt al-šaḡāba (Words of the Prophet's Companions)

12. Compare the list of twenty titles that Muḡāhid compiled in: Rāḡib, *Nawādir*: xiii–xv. This list contains three titles—*Aṭḡāq al-ḡaḡab* (xiii s.v. 4), *Uṣūl al-iṣṡiqāq* (xv s.v. 18), and *Aḡwāl al-mawaddāt wa-murā'āt al-maḡabbāt* (xv s.v. 20)—that otherwise are not ascribed to Rāḡib. For the discussion of an undated *Aṭḡāq al-ḡaḡab* manuscript, which is held in the Astan-i Quds-i Razavi Library in Meshed and whose author has not been determined, compare: *Fihrist-i Kitābhāne-yi mubārake* 3: part 15, 2 s.v. 5. Muḡāhid, however, found the reference to an *Aṭḡāq al-ḡaḡab* by Rāḡib in a history of Arabic literature: Faḡūrī, *Tārīḡ*: 693. The title appears in a chapter about Aḡmad Šauqī (1868–1932), and there is no comment whatsoever about the work itself. For an *Uṣūl al-iṣṡiqāq* Muḡāhid referred to Rāḡib's own Koran dictionary: Rāḡib, *Mufradāt*: 43 s.v. b-r-d and 89 s.v. ḡ-d-r. In both instances, however, Rāḡib used *iṣṡiqāq* as a technical term of Arabic grammar: “alā ḡasab mā yubaiyanu fī uṣūl iṣṡiqāq” according to that which was explained regarding the principles of etymology (43); and “ḡasabamā baiyannā-hu fī uṣūl iṣṡiqāq” according to that which we explained regarding the principles of etymology (89). For the *Aḡwāl al-mawaddāt*, Muḡāhid referred to the Astan-i Quds-i Razavi Library in Meshed, but did not specify whether the number 77 is a call number or a page number in one of the library's numerous catalogues for its more than 29,000 manuscripts. For a description of the collection and its catalogues, compare: Hadi Sharifi in Roper, *World Survey*, 1: 481–486.

Lost work, but documented as extant through citations in the tafsīr by Zarkašī (died 1391)

2. [tafsīr = no independent title transmitted (Koran commentary)]

Lost work, but mentioned as extant by Suyūṭī (died 1505)

3. Afānīn al-balāḡa (Arts of Rhetoric)

Lost works, but mentioned as extant by Katip Çelebi (died 1657)

4. al-Aḥlāq (Ethics)
 5. Iḥtiḡāḡ al-qurrā' (Vindication of the Koran Reciters)
 6. Kitāb al-ma'ānī al-akbar (The Greatest Book of Rhetorical Figures)
 7. al-Risāla fī fawā'id al-Qur'ān (Treatise about the Benefits of the Koran)
 8. Ṣaiqal al-fahm (Burnisher of Comprehension)
 9. Taḥqīq al-bayān fī ta'wīl al-Qur'ān
 (Precise Eloquence Concerning the Explication of the Koran)

Lost work, but mentioned as extant by Ḥwānsārī (died 1895)

10. al-Īmān wa-l-kufr (Belief and Apostasy)

*Preserved work whose manuscript Ritter discovered in Kazan in the 1920s, but the ascription to Rāḡib is **not supported by indirect evidence** (adab)*

1. Adab al-ṣatranḡ (Etiquette of Chess)

*Preserved works whose manuscripts Sārīsī discovered in Istanbul in the 1980s, but the ascription to Rāḡib is **not supported by indirect evidence** (aḥlāq)*

2. al-Risāla fī marātib al-ʿulūm
 (Treatise about the Ranks of the Sciences)
 3. al-Risāla fī ādāb muḥālaṭat al-nās
 (Treatise about the Etiquette of Human Company)
 4. al-Risāla fī anna faḍīlat al-insān bi-l-ʿulūm
 (Treatise Concerning that Man's Virtue are the Sciences)

(kalām)

5. al-Risāla fī al-iʿtiqād (Treatise about Faith)
 6. al-Risāla fī ḍikr al-wāḥid al-aḥad
 (Treatise about the Invocation of the Oneness of God)

(adab)

7. Maḡmaʿ al-balāḡa (Academy of Rhetoric)

On the one hand, the number of lost works ascribed to Rāḡib accumulated over time so that more works seemed to have been ascribed to Rāḡib the longer his works were in circulation. On the other hand, there are extant manuscripts of works ascribed to

Rāḡib, the titles of which are not documented by indirect evidence. Both observations suggest that Rāḡib's biography evolved as a secondary phenomenon, following the reception of his works. This process has its origin in the lack of functional data about Rāḡib's person because it allowed for the spawning of speculations that over time were accepted as facts. In the twelfth century Ibn Funduq did not know of any date for Rāḡib's life or death, in the fifteenth century Suyūṭī could only guess when he was alive, and in the twentieth century Brockelmann accepted the guess as a given death date. The emergence of Rāḡib's biography can be divided into three phases. The first phase extended from the eleventh to the fourteenth century, from Māfarrūḡī to Zarkaṣī. Rāḡib's name or biography, as well as citations from his works, surfaced in heterogeneous sources, documenting little beyond the existence of a written oeuvre attached to an obscure author. The second phase extended from the fifteenth to the twentieth century, from Suyūṭī to Āḡā Buzurg Tihrānī and Brockelmann. Suyūṭī wrote a biographical entry for Rāḡib that was going to shape the perception of Rāḡib among Sunnites, Shi'ites, and European Arabists alike. Rāḡib suddenly appeared as a much less obscure author because Suyūṭī's successors, despite dogmatic differences, took his opinion as their starting point. Suyūṭī's authority seemed to grant historical reality to the nevertheless obscure Rāḡib. In addition, the *Muḡāḡarāt* was now firmly linked to Rāḡib. This process was already analyzed in the previous chapter. The third phase began in the twentieth century with Muḡammad Qazwīnī, Wilferd Madelung, and Sārīsī. These scholars searched for internal evidence in works ascribed to Rāḡib, especially names of authors and celebrities, to identify more precisely Rāḡib's contemporaries, companions, or patrons.

III. b. References to popular works and their obscure author from western Iran

The only reference that places Rāḡib in Buyid Isfahan stands in the *Maḥāsin Isfahān* (Beauties of Isfahan). This local history raises important structural questions about the relationship between biographical data and regional historiography that are pertinent to the problems of how to distinguish between historiography and biographical dictionaries.¹³ Māfarrūḡī is an obscure figure; there is not even an estimated date of his death in the eleventh century. The *Maḥāsin Isfahān* was preserved in an Arabic version, as well as a fourteenth-century Persian revision.¹⁴ Because of the insufficient research on the work's manuscript transmission, there is not yet a satisfactory interpretation of the conflicting internal evidence in the Arabic text and its Persian revision as to when precisely in the eleventh century Māfarrūḡī composed the work.¹⁵ Although Māfarrūḡī's reference to Rāḡib is of little use to determine a *terminus ad quem* for Rāḡib's life, it provides some evidence for how younger contemporaries perceived Rāḡib and evaluated his intellectual standing. Māfarrūḡī distinguished between contemporaries

13. For a presentation of this problem as blurred borders between prosopography and biographical dictionaries, see: Rosenthal, *History*: 161. For a typology of Arab-Islamic historiography that defines prosopography (*ṭabaqāt*) as a historiographical genre, compare the three ideal types of biography (*sīra*), prosopography (*ṭabaqāt*), and chronography (*ta'rīḡ*) in: Robinson, *Historiography*: xxiv–xxv and 55–79. Robinson defined historiography as “prose representations of the past in which chronology, whether explicit or implicit, is an essential feature” (55). Afterwards he juxtaposed biography and prosopography, assuming that exemplary individuals were described in biographies while members of groups and classes were recorded in biographical dictionaries. Finally, he distinguished between annalistic and caliphal history as the two principal forms of chronography (75). Since Robinson did not identify the term *chronography* as a neologism, replacing the terms *chronicle* and *annals* commonly used to describe and classify these works (compare: Humphreys, “Historiography”: 252; and Humphreys, “Ta'rīḡ”: 271), he did not demonstrate why this term has a higher heuristic value than the established terms, such as *chronicle* and *historiography*. For the etymology and word history of the term *chronicle* in the Latin West, see: Melville, “Chronik.”

14. Browne, “Account of a Rare Manuscript History of Isfahan”: 412–413; Bulliet, “al-Māfarrūḡī,” and Paul, “Histories”: 117 and 119 note 14; compare: Storey 1,2: 349 s.v. 455; and Storey-Bregel 2: 1011–1012 s.v. 873 [455].

15. For the debate about the date of composition, see above, chapter II, note 155.

(*muta'ahhirūn*) and predecessors (*mutaqaddimūn*), and included an Abū al-Qāsim al-Rāḡib in his list of specialists of Arabic letters (*adab*) from previous generations.¹⁶

Māfarrūhī provided no further information about this man, nor did he link him to any specific work. In the fourteenth-century Persian revision, the term *adab* is no longer employed, but the list is appended with an introduction that appears as its fourteenth-century definition, describing these men as authorities of grammar, Arabic and Persian poetry and poetics, and secretaryship:

Masters thoroughly familiar with the sciences of syntax and inflection and with insight into the peculiarities of the discipline of conjugating verbs and declining nouns and the apprehension of word patterns; men who were preserving the words of the bedouins, the master poets of polished words, and the principles for the invention of brilliant Arabic and Persian; the distinguished men among the composers of official decrees and letters; and men who were skilled in the principles of amplification and embellishment to structure a text.¹⁷

Although Rāḡib is associated with *adab*—and not with theology, ethics, or philosophy—in both versions of Māfarrūhī's text, the pragmatic implications of this association are unclear. This ambiguity directs attention to a striking similarity between Rāḡib and Māfarrūhī. Both men wrote their works in Arabic, and neither of them mentioned the name of a patron or identified the circumstances and date of the work's composition in its introduction. Māfarrūhī included only scant information about

16. Māfarrūhī, *Kitāb*: “al-mutaqaddimūn min ahl al-adab” (32). Rāḡib's name is the fifth. The organizing principle of the list is the grouping of names, which in themselves are arranged in alphabetical order beginning with their *kunya*. This list covers the third class of people from a total of seven classes.

17. Māfarrūhī, *Targhume*: “Ustādān-i mutabāḥḥir-i ‘ilm-i naḥw u-‘irāb u-mutabaṣṣir-i ḡarā’ib-i fann-i taṣrīf-i kalime u-iṣṭifāq-i abniye u-ḥāfiẓān-i luḡāt-i A‘rāb u-fuḥūl-i šu‘arā’-i suḡan-i munaqqah u-uṣūl-i iḥtirā‘-i mustamlah-i ‘arabī u-parsī u-fāḥirān-i ahl-i tawqī‘ u-inšā’ u-māḥiran-i aṣl-i tarṣī‘ u-implā’ ‘alā sabīl al-taḥṣīl” (123). Under the heading “auwāl-i mutaqaddimān” (124), Rāḡib's name follows as the twenty-first, because the Persian translator added sixteen new names before he returned to Māfarrūhī's original list. Compare: Browne, “Account of a Rare Manuscript History of Isfahan”: 681.

theologians in the *Maḥāsīn Isfahān*,¹⁸ and Rāḡib presented a strictly non-partisan outlook at dogmatic positions in the *Muḥāḍarāt*.¹⁹ Since Buyid Isfahan was a wealthy regional center, consisting of an agglomeration of districts separated from each other by open spaces or walls,²⁰ these observations suggest that Isfahan boasted diverse literate audiences. Māfarrūḡī's reference to Rāḡib thus provides a glimpse of the socioeconomic context in which the *Muḥāḍarāt* could have originated. On the one hand, the manufacture of books without patrons indicates the existence a book market aside from the sponsorship of elite families. On the other, neutrality on dogmatic issues and the disregard for the city's theologians could signal either an atmosphere of religious tolerance or bitter strife among various theological factions. Not taking sides in debates about dogmatic issues seems advisable, though opportunistic, if the sides are involved in a divisive religious conflict, and unnecessary, if being on a certain side is only a matter of personal concern.

The next reference to Rāḡib appears in a biographical dictionary, compiled by Ibn Funduq in the twelfth century.²¹ The life of this author is much better documented than Māfarrūḡī's.²² Comparing the works ascribed to these two men reveals the development

18. Bulliet, "al-Māfarrūḡī;" and Paul, "Histories": 131 note 57.

19. See above, chapter II, notes 157 and 167.

20. Lambton, "Isfahān": 97 and 100; compare: Le Strange, *Lands*: 203–205. 'Alā' al-Daula, the last Buyid governor between 1007 and 1042, repeatedly recovered the city from the Ghaznavids and ordered the construction of fortifications (Māfarrūḡī, *Tarḡume*: 113).

21. Ibn Funduq, *Ta'rīḡ*: 112–113 s.v. 62.

22. For Ibn Funduq's biography, see: Dunlop, "al-Bayhaḡī;" Halm, "Bayhaḡī;" and Pourshariati, "Local Historiography": 140–143. For his different names, see above, chapter II, note 113.

of language politics in Iran between the eleventh and fourteenth centuries with regard to the composition of biographical dictionaries and local historiography. On the one hand, both men wrote a local history. Yet, unlike his eleventh-century predecessor, Ibn Funduq chose Persian for the *Tarīḥ-i Baihaq* (Chronicle of Baihaq) about the district Baihaq, which lies west of Nishapur in the eastern province Khurasan.²³ On the other hand, Māfarrūḥī's *Maḥāsin Isfahān* and Ibn Funduq's biographical dictionary were written in Arabic, and neither is dedicated to an identified patron.²⁴ Nonetheless, in the fourteenth century, both works were translated into Persian.²⁵ In the biographical dictionary, Ibn Funduq focused on learned men whose achievements were already on the brink of oblivion.²⁶ Rāḡib must have been famous enough to come to Ibn Funduq's attention to qualify as a deserving unknown author, since the absence of functional data for Rāḡib's life was the condition of being included in this biographical dictionary. So little was known about Rāḡib that Ibn Funduq did not even associate him with Isfahan, and hence did not add the *nisba* Isfahānī to the name. Ibn Funduq introduced Rāḡib as Abū al-Qāsim al-Ḥusain b. Muḥammad b. al-Mufaḍḍal al-Rāḡib, identifying Rāḡib as his *laqab*

23. Rosenthal, *History*: 161–162; compare: Rieu, *Supplement*: 60–61 s.v. 89. For a description of this local history as prosopography, see: Halm, “Bayhaqī”: 896; compare: Pourshariati, “Local Historiography”: 143 and 156.

24. Ibn Funduq, *Ta'rīḥ*: 14–16.

25. For the Persian revision of Māfarrūḥī's work, see above, note 14. For the Persian translation of Ibn Funduq's work, see: Dunlop, “al-Bayhaqī”: 1131; compare: Halm, “Bayhaqī”: 896. Unfortunately, the cataloguing of its first imprint—*Tatimmat kitāb ṣiawān al-ḥikma*, ed. Mohammad Shafi (Lahore: University of the Panjab, 1935)—does not indicate whether this edition contains both versions of the work: OCLC record 24971408.

26. Ibn Funduq, *Ta'rīḥ*: “wa-dākir min tawārīḥ al-ḥukamā' wa-fawā'id-i him mā qaruba ḡurūb nuḡūmi-hī fī maḡārib al-nisyan wa-adraḡa-hū al-dahr taḥt ṭayy al-ḥidṭān” *from the stories of the learned men and their useful lessons a record of those, whose stars are close to disappearing in the sunsets of oblivion and which the era hides in the folds of chitchat* (16).

and al-Ḥusain as his *ism* and adding even the names of father and grandfather.²⁷

Nonetheless, Ibn Funduq did not use any part of this full name again throughout the entry, which in its printed version covers two full pages. He presented Rāḡib as a scholar whose works combined Islamic law with philosophy.²⁸ He mentioned the titles of three works ascribed to Rāḡib that correspond to that assessment: the semantic study *Ġurraṭ al-tanzīl wa-durraṭ al-ta'wīl* (The New Moon of the Revelation and the Finest Pearl of its Explication), the ethical treatise *al-Darfa* (Guide), the full title of which is *al-Darfa ilā makārim al-šarfa* (Guide to the Ennobling Qualities of the Islamic Law), and the obscure *Kalimāt al-ṣaḥāba* (Words of the Prophet's Companions).²⁹ Ibn Funduq used the remaining part of the entry to discuss which form of knowledge improves a person's humanity. For this juxtaposition of uplifting and corrupting knowledge Ibn Funduq relied on quotes from a fourth work by Rāḡib, the ethical treatise *Tafṣīl al-naš'atain wa-taḥṣīl al-sa'ādatain* (The Exposition of the Two Forms of Origin and the Acquisition of the Two Forms of Happiness).³⁰ Ibn Funduq's mention of the two philosophical essays is of special importance because Rāḡib's reputation as theologian and philosopher has continued to rest on those works until today.³¹ The list suggests that Ibn Funduq, unlike

27. Ibn Funduq, *Ta'rīḥ*: 112 .

28. Ibn Funduq, *Ta'rīḥ*: “kāna min ḥukamā' al-islām wa-huwa alladī ḡama'a baina al-šarī'a wa-l-ḥikma fī taṣānīfī-hī.” (112).

29. Aside from this reference, I am not aware of any other mention of a *Kalimāt al-ṣaḥāba* by Rāḡib, be it in premodern Islamic sources or in modern scholarship. For a discussion of the other two works, especially with regard to the various titles of the *Ġurraṭ al-tanzīl* and its wrong ascription to al-Ḥatīb al-Iskāfī (died 1030), see: Sārīsī, *Al-Rāḡib al-Isfahānī*: 56–59 (*al-Darfa*), and 74–82 (*Durraṭ al-tanzīl*).

30. For a discussion of the work, see: Sārīsī, *Al-Rāḡib al-Isfahānī*: 60–62.

31. Madelung, “Ar-Rāḡib al-Isfahānī”: 152–153 and 160–163; and Rowson, “al-Rāḡib al-Isfahānī”: 390.

Māfarrūḥī, perceived Rāḡib as an author of theological and philosophical works, and did not connect him with *adab*.

The most puzzling aspect of the works by Māfarrūḥī and Ibn Funduq is that neither surfaced in any of the later biographical dictionaries or book catalogues that contained entries about Rāḡib. The disregard of the works by Māfarrūḥī and Ibn Funduq can be considered sensible, since neither author provided functional data about that man aside from some book titles. Moreover, any explanation of this omission would need to consider the interface between the reception of biographical dictionaries and local Iranian historiography, on the one hand, and the canon and research methods of the authors of biographical dictionaries, on the other hand. Unfortunately, this is impossible because of the current state of research on the transmission of Islamic manuscripts, as well as on secular and religious education in medieval Islamic societies. In twentieth-century scholarship, Madelung was the first to direct attention to Māfarrūḥī's mention of Rāḡib, and afterwards Sārīsī and Rowson listed the *Maḥāsin Isfahān* in their bibliographies.³² Ibn Funduq's reference entered twentieth-century scholarship when, in 1935, the Arabic text was published together with its Persian translation, and afterwards Brockelmann referred to this edition in the supplement to the *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur*.³³

32. Madelung, "Ar-Rāḡib al-Isfahānī": 163 postscript to 157. Sārīsī, *Al-Rāḡib al-Isfahānī*: 292 s.v. 64; however, in his chapter about Rāḡib's life, Sārīsī used Māfarrūḥī to speculate about the name of an alleged patron: 32 note 7. Rowson, "al-Rāḡib al-Isfahānī": 390. Madelung did not mention how he learned about this Rāḡib reference, but he referred to the work's Persian translation, the critical edition of which had been reviewed in *Oriens* in 1951 (Ritter, Review). Outside published scholarship, the posthumously published notes of Muḥammad Qazwīnī document that he knew about the Rāḡib reference in the Arabic edition of Māfarrūḥī: Qazwīnī, *Yād dāšt-hā*, 5: 15.

33. Dunlop, "al-Bayhaḡī": 1131; and GAL S 1: 506.

Ibn Funduq's perception that Rāḡib enjoyed a good reputation among theologians is confirmed by Rāzī and Zarkašī. In the second half of the twelfth century, Rāzī mentioned Rāḡib in his *Asās al-taqdīs fī ʿilm al-kalām* (The Worship's Foundation Concerning Scholastic Theology). He called him Abū al-Qāsim al-Rāḡib, using exactly the same name as Māfarrūḡī. Rāzī counted Rāḡib among the Sunnite authorities, considering Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Ṭūsī al-Ġazālī (1058–1111) and him as having been his masters (*aṣḥāb*).³⁴ Rāzī used the term *ṣāhib* to determine his relationship with both Rāḡib and Ġazālī and to distinguish them from the Muʿtazilites, on the one hand, and the Rafīḡites, on the other. However, Rāzī did not provide any additional evidence to explain in more detail how the two scholars were actually related to his own theological positions. Later authors also never discussed whether Rāzī's mention of Rāḡib added extra weight to the assumption that Rāḡib was renowned in western Iran because he had worked in any of its cities or at any of its courts. The indirect geographical evidence for Rāḡib's local Iranian fame follows from the observation that Rāzī was a native of Rayy in the western province Jibal, and spent most of his life in Herat in the eastern province Khurasan.³⁵ Even if Rāzī had traveled more widely in Iran and Central Asia than either Māfarrūḡī or Ibn Funduq, all three men belonged to the learned circles of medieval Iran. Yet, in the second half of the fourteenth century, some of Rāḡib's theological works were known to Zarkašī, the Shafīʿite

34. Faḥr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Asās*: “bal ḡamʿ ʿazīm min al-muslimīn iḡtārū maḡhaba-hum miṡla Muʿammar b. ʿAbbād al-Salamī min al-muʿtazila wa-miṡla Muḥammad b. Nuʿmān min al-rāfiḡa wa-miṡla Abī al-Qāsim al-Rāḡib wa-Abī Ḥāmid al-Ġazālī min aṣḡābi-nā” *But a magnificent group of Muslims selected their legal school, for example, among the Muʿtazilites Muʿammar b. ʿAbbād al-Salamī, among the Rafīḡites Muḥammad b. Nuʿmān, and among our masters Abū al-Qāsim al-Rāḡib and Abū Ḥāmid al-Ġazālī* (5).

35. Anawati, “Fakḥr al-Dīn”: 751–752 .

theologian who had received his training in Cairo and Damascus.³⁶ In his renowned Koran commentary *al-Burhān fī ‘ulūm al-Qur’ān* (The Proof Concerning the Koran’s Sciences), Zarkašī mentioned three works ascribed to Rāḡib, two with their shortened titles—the *Mufradāt* and the *Darfa*—and an untitled *tafsīr*.³⁷ In accordance with the citation practices of medieval Islamic scholars, Zarkašī usually adduced statements from these works without identifying his respective source.³⁸ He identified their author just as Rāḡib, without adding any other part of his name, such as the *kunya* Abū al-Qāsim or the *nisba* Iṣfahānī. This consistent citation practice suggests that for Zarkašī the name al-Rāḡib sufficed to unmistakably distinguish Rāḡib from other authors. Conversely, Zarkašī’s citation practice does not offer any indication as to whether he considered Rāḡib an author from western Iran. More important, the complete absence of any further evidence precludes any conclusions about what was known about Rāḡib’s biography and whether anything aside from Rāḡib’s scholarly reputation, such as his mother tongue, his place of origin, or his place of employment, was meaningful information for Zarkašī. Perhaps the absence of any additional information about Rāḡib in the *Burhān* explains why Zarkašī’s use of Rāḡib’s works was not picked up by later scholars who compiled biographical dictionaries and book catalogues. Like the references by Māfarrūḡhī and Ibn

36. GAL 2: 91–92, and GAL S 2: 108.

37. Zarkašī, *Burhān*: “wa-min aḡsani-hā [i.e., ḡamā‘a] kitāb »al-Mufradāt« li-l-Rāḡib” *the best of the group is the Mufradāt by Rāḡib* (1: 289); “qāla al-Rāḡib fī »al-Darfa«” *Rāḡib said in the Darfa* (3: 345); “tamma ra’aitu al-Rāḡib qāla fī tafsīr sūrat al-baqara” *Then I saw that Rāḡib said in the commentary on the second sura* (4: 157); and passim. Only the introduction to Rāḡib’s *tafsīr* has been preserved, and the text has been published in Nāḡhī, *Ḥawālid*: 79–131.

38. For all other references to Rāḡib, see the index: Zarkašī, *Burhān*, 4: 468–469 s.v. al-Rāḡib al-Iṣfahānī; in this edition the editor has identified the work, quoted by Zarkašī, whenever necessary.

Funduq, Zarkašī's indirect testimony for works ascribed to Rāḡib was never entered into his official biographical record. In twentieth-century scholarship, Sārīsī noticed Zarkašī's references to Rāḡib's works and then Rowson added them to his Rāḡib article for the second edition of the *Encyclopedia of Islam*.³⁹

Zarkašī's treatment of Rāḡib corresponds to the presentation of Rāḡib in the biographical dictionaries by Ḍahabī and Ṣafadī. Both entries support the conclusion that by the second half of the thirteenth century various works ascribed to Rāḡib were known outside Iran and accessible to scholars active in Syria and Egypt. From the perspective of these Mamluk scholars, Rāḡib was not celebrated as the author of any specific work, yet firmly associated with Isfahan because in their biographical dictionaries the *nisba* Iṣfahānī is now appended to his name. Otherwise, Ḍahabī and Ṣafadī disagreed about the extent of information that could be conjectured about Rāḡib's life. In the *Siyar ʿalām al-nubalāʾ*, Ḍahabī introduced Rāḡib as Abū al-Qāsim al-Ḥusain b. Muḥammad b. al-Mufaḍḍal al-Iṣfahānī and then explicitly identified Rāḡib as his *laqab*.⁴⁰ With the exception of the *nisba* Iṣfahānī, Ḍahabī's version of Rāḡib's name is identical with Ibn Funduq's, especially with regard to asserting Rāḡib as *laqab*. Because Māfarrūḥī, Rāzī, or Zarkašī referred to Rāḡib without clearly indicating whether this name served as *ism* or *laqab*, Ḍahabī's emphasis appears as an effort to highlight the few unambiguous data about this man. Ḍahabī stated that Rāḡib wrote books and was considered an outstanding

39. Sārīsī, *Al-Rāḡib al-Iṣfahānī*. 73; and Rowson, "al-Rāḡib al-Iṣfahānī": 390.

40. Ḍahabī, *Siyar*, 18: 120–121 s.v. 60; for the emphasized *laqab*, see the phrase: "al-muqallab bi-l-Rāḡib" (121). For different versions of Rāḡib's name in his various work, see the evidence collected by Sārīsī, *Al-Rāḡib al-Iṣfahānī*. 27 note 1.

scholastic theologian. He added that he could not obtain Rāḡib's obituary or biography.⁴¹ However, Dahabī did not see the necessity to explain this difficulty. He concluded the entry with the speculation that the Mongol historian Kamāl al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Razzāq b. Aḥmad b. al-Fuwaṭī (1244–1232) had included an entry for Rāḡib in his vast *Maḡmaʿ al-ādāb fī muʿāḡam al-alqāb* (The Assembly of Social Graces Concerning the Dictionary of Monikers).⁴² Dahabī's inference is logical because, as already mentioned, he considered Rāḡib a *laqab*. Although the complete text of Ibn al-Fuwaṭī's biographical dictionary is lost, the preserved sections of its abridgment cover the letter *ḡain* and do not contain an entry for Rāḡib.⁴³ Since Dahabī arranged the biographies in the *Siyar* according to generations, thus forming groups of contemporaries, the death dates for Rāḡib's neighbors indicate that Dahabī believed Rāḡib to have been active in the first half of the eleventh century.⁴⁴ In contrast, Ṣafadī did not venture to offer any supposition at all in his *Kitāb al-wāfī bi-l-wafayāt*. His entry for Rāḡib is therefore less informative than Dahabī's, and the only datum provided by the obituary is the scholar's full name al-Ḥusain b. Muḥammad Abū al-Qāsim al-Rāḡib al-Iṣfahānī.⁴⁵

41. Dahabī, *Siyar*: “ṣāḡib al-taṣānīf kāna min adḡkiyā' al-mutakkalimīn lam azfar la-hū bi-wafāt wa-lā bi-tarḡama” (18: 121).

42. Dahabī, *Siyar*: “laʿalla fī »al-Alqāb« li-Ibn al-Fuwaṭī .” (18: 121).

43. Rosenthal, “Ibn al-Fuwaṭī”: 769; and Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, *Talḡīs*, 2: 1148–1151.

44. That the time frame of Rāḡib's life is guesswork is emphasized in the text: Dahabī, *Siyar*: “wa-kāna in ṣā'a Allāh fī ḡadā al-waqt ḡayyan yus'alu ʿan-hu” *He was—God willing—alive at that time—He is responsible for him* (18: 121). In the entry, preceding Rāḡib's, the Dailamite Buyid al-Malik al-Rāḡim died in Seljuq captivity in 1058 (18: 120 s.v. 59), and in following entry, the Rāfiḡite theologian al-Karāḡakī passed away in 1057 (18: 122 s.v. 61). That Dahabī used chronology to arrange the biographies is further confirmed by the sequence of names: al-Malik al-Rāḡim, Rāḡib, al-Karāḡakī. Compare also the names and death dates of the first and the last biographical entry in this volume: 18: 5 s.v. 1, and 260 s.v. 326.

45. Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*. 45 s.v. 44; in this edition, *Iṣfahānī* is spelled the Arabic way *Iṣfabānī*.

III. c. The creation of a biographical sketch

In fifteenth-century Egypt, Suyūṭī fashioned the version of Rāḡib’s biography that afterwards both Sunnites and Shi‘ites were going to use as the backbone of their versions of Rāḡib’s life. Suyūṭī’s sources were his direct knowledge of three works ascribed to Rāḡib and an indirect reference to Rāzī’s favorable opinion of Rāḡib, which Ḍahabī and Ṣafadī had not included in their biographical dictionaries. The Shafi‘ite Suyūṭī was a polymath and commanded over an exceptional breadth of learning, so that his knowledge of Rāḡib’s works does not allow inferring which of those works were actually studied by more average Mamluk readers.⁴⁶ Although some popularity seems to follow from Suyūṭī’s observation that “many people considered him [i.e., Rāḡib] a Mu‘tazilite,”⁴⁷ only detailed codicological studies of the extant manuscripts of works ascribed to Rāḡib will provide insight into his readership. Such codicological research is also indispensable because the current location of a manuscript was rarely its place of manufacture or its place of predominant use. However, the case of the *Muḥāḍarāt* offers additional support that in Egypt, and probably Syria, readers other than Zarkašī and Suyūṭī could obtain copies of works ascribed to Rāḡib. Among the surveyed *Muḥāḍarāt* manuscripts, three copies can be related to Mamluk Egypt. The first is the dated early-thirteenth-century manuscript in Berlin. This copy contains a marginal note by a late-thirteenth-century owner with the name ‘Abd Allāh.⁴⁸ During the reign of the Mamluk sultan Kitbugā (ruled

46. Geoffrey, “al-Suyūṭī”: 914–916.

47. Suyūṭī, *Buġya*: “fa-inna kaṭīran min al-nās yazunnūna anna-hū mu‘tazilī” (296 s.v. al-Mufaḍḍal).

48. Berlin, Staatsbibliothek – Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung, MS arab. Wetzstein II 1175: “yaqūlu mālik hādā al-kitāb ‘Abd Allāh... inna al-karkand ṣaḥīḥ wa qad ra’aitu-hū fī qal‘at al-ġabal fī al-Qāhira wa-naḥnu sākinīn bi-l-qal‘a fī ta’rīḥ muddat sinīn wa-āḡari-hā fī sulṭān Kitbugā fī sanat arba‘ wa-

1294–1296) ʿAbd Allāh was stationed in the Citadel of Cairo and observed a rare bird, which Rāḡib discussed in the twenty-fourth chapter.⁴⁹ The second is an undated manuscript in Halle (Saale). As already described in the previous chapter, this copy consists of a Mamluk fragment with an Ottoman continuation.⁵⁰ The third is a dated seventeenth-century manuscript in Cairo. This copy preserved a *Muḥāḍarāt* abridgment that was originally compiled by Suyūṭī. Only an examination of the manuscript would reveal whether Suyūṭī produced this version as a private copy or a commercial trade book.⁵¹ This scattered, and admittedly tenuous, evidence for a Mamluk reception of the *Muḥāḍarāt* throws some light on the context of Suyūṭī’s appreciation for Rāḡib’s oeuvre. Suyūṭī’s opinion could dominate the later perception of Rāḡib because Suyūṭī was a highly respected scholar so that his judgment was very difficult to challenge. As Suyūṭī was also an extremely prodigious author, his numerous works, as well as the opinions he expressed in them, circulated widely throughout the *umma*.

tisʿīn wa-ḥams wa-tisʿīn wa-sittimī’a” *The owner of this book ʿAbd Allāh... says that the karkand is real, and I saw him in the Citadel in Cairo, while we were staying in the citadel for two whole years during the reign of sultan Kitbugā during the two ḥiḡra years 694 and 695 [i.e., 1295–1296 CE]. (fol.68r).* Unfortunately, part of the marginal note is missing because the manuscript was later cropped to be bound, or rebound.

49. For the description of the bird *karkand* in the anthology, compare: Rāḡib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ed. Beirut, 4: 670. The Persian word *karkand* is not included in Lane, while in Arabic and Persian dictionaries—see, for example: Hava: 652; Wehr & Cowan: 962; and Muʿīn, 3: 2949—*karkand* is translated as “spinel ruby.”

50. Halle, Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Sachsen-Anhalt – Bibliothek der DMG, MS arab. 116.

51. Cairo, Dār al-kutub al-miṣrīya, MS arab. ādāb muḥtaṣar 97; compare: *Fihris al-kutub al-ʿarabīya*: 345; compare: Ḥāḡḡī Ḥalīfa, *Kaṣf al-zunūn*, 5: 415. For a list of the known and extant *Muḥāḍarāt* abridgments, see above, chapter II, note 13.

Suyūṭī was the first to explicitly suggest that Rāḡib was alive around 1106.⁵² Suyūṭī probably based this guess on Rāzī’s passing reference that both Rāḡib and Ġazālī had been his masters. Yet Suyūṭī had to paraphrase Rāzī’s very short statement to reach the interpretation that Rāzī considered Rāḡib not only one of the leading Sunnite theologian, but also Ġazālī’s contemporary.⁵³ Since Ġazālī lived from 1058 to 1111, Suyūṭī could now conjecture that Rāḡib too was alive at the beginning of the twelfth century. This conjecture was most influential. In the sixteenth century, Taşköprüzade quoted this information verbatim from the *Buġya*.⁵⁴ In the seventeenth century, Katip Çelebi interpreted Suyūṭī’s expression as evidence for Rāḡib’s approximate date of death at the beginning of the twelfth century.⁵⁵ In the second half of the nineteenth century, Ismail Paşa seemed to have combined the interpretations of Suyūṭī and Katip Çelebi to conclude that Rāḡib died between September 1106 and August 1107.⁵⁶ In 1865, when

52. Suyūṭī, *Buġya*: “kāna fī awā’il al-mi’a al-ḥāmisa” *He lived at the beginning of the five hundredth hiġra year* (296). The *hiġra* year 500 began on 2 September 1106 CE and ended on 22 August 1107 CE. For an interpretation of this estimated date to mean the fifth century after the *hiġra*, see: Madelung, “Ar-Rāḡib al-Iṣfahānī”: 155 notes 21 and 23; Rowson, “al-Rāḡib al-Iṣfahānī”: 389; and Thomas, “Concept of *Muḥāḍara*”: 154. This interpretation is supported by the observation that in exact dates cardinal numbers replace ordinal numbers (Fischer, *Grammar*: 84 s.v. §133.1). Yet it is based on the assumption that Suyūṭī’s use of ordinal numbers in estimated dates corresponds to their use in twentieth-century English and German so that the fifth century would comprise the years 400 to 499. This assumption is not supported by Katip Çelebi’s interpretation of this phrase; see below, note 55.

53. Suyūṭī, *Buġya*: “ḍikr al-imām Faḥr al-Dīn al-Rāzī... anna Abā al-Qāsim al-Rāḡib min a’immat al-sunna wa-qirna-hū bi-l-Ġazālī” (296). Suyūṭī’s phrase *qirna-hū bi-* paraphrases and interprets the conjunction *wa-* used by Rāzī between the names of Abū al-Qāsim al-Rāḡib and Abū Ḥamid al-Ġazālī; see the Rāzī quote above, note 34.

54. Taşköprüzade, *Miftāḥ*, 1: 226.

55. Ḥāġġī Ḥalīfa, *Kaṣf al-zunūn*: “wa-huwa al-imām Abū al-Qāsim al-Ḥusain b. Muḥammad al-Iṣfahānī al-mutawaffā sanat naiyif wa-ḥamsamī’a” (1: 203). However, Katip Çelebi included the verbatim quote from Suyūṭī’s *Buġya* into a later entry: 2: 244–245.

56. Ismā’īl Bāṣā, *Hadīyat al-’arīfīn*: “tawaffā sanat 500 ḥamsamī’a” (1: col.311).

Flügel published the first volume of the catalogue of Arabic manuscripts in Vienna, he converted Katip Çelebi's approximate date of Rāḡib's death, arguing with Katip Çelebi's interpretation of Suyūṭī's phrase, into the estimated date of death between August 1108 and July 1109.⁵⁷ Afterwards Wilhelm Ahlwardt (1822–1909)⁵⁸ and Brockelmann followed Flügel's interpretation.⁵⁹ Because of the great importance of the *Geschichte der Arabischen Litteratur* as reference work, the year 1108 as the approximate date of Rāḡib's death is still used in many library records. Moreover, in the twentieth century the Arabs Sarkīs and Ziriklī, as well as the Iranian Āḡā Buzurg Tihrānī, introduced this death date into their Arabic reference works.⁶⁰

Suyūṭī shared with Zarkašī the habit of referring to Rāḡib just as Rāḡib,⁶¹ but Suyūṭī was not consistent with regard to the other components of Rāḡib's full name.

57. Flügel, *Handschriften*: "Dass 502 sein Sterbejahr ist, sagt Ḥādschī Chalfa zwar nur an der einzigen Stelle ..., wo im gedruckten Text *sanat naiyif wa-ḥamsami 'a* steht, allein einige Codices bezeichnen hier das Jahr bestimmter durch 502." (1: 341 note 1 s.v. 369). Unfortunately, Flügel neither described these manuscripts nor provided information about their current owners. For the disagreement between Flügel and his colleagues about how to interpret and distinguish between the various Arabic phrases used for estimated dates, see: Flügel, "Ueber die Bedeutung." For the supposition that Ahlwardt was the first to conjecture this death date, see: Madelung, "Ar-Rāḡib al-Iṣfahānī": 156.

58. The first volume of the Berlin catalogue, which was published in 1887, contains an entry for a nineteenth-century copy of the *Mufradāt*: Ahlwardt, *Verzeichnis*, 1: 269 s.v. 675. Ahlwardt observed that Suyūṭī and Katip Çelebi did not agree on Rāḡib's name, considered the *nisba* Iṣfahānī a later addition and gave as death date the year 1108. However, Ahlwardt only cross-referenced a manuscript in Paris and did not mention Flügel's Vienna catalogue.

59. GAL 1: 289; and GAL S 1: 505; compare: Brockelmann, "al-Rāḡib al-Iṣfahānī": 1185.

60. Sarkīs, *Mu'ḡam*: col.921 s.v. al-Rāḡib al-Iṣfahānī; Āḡā Buzurg Tihrānī, *Darfa*, 5: 45 s.v. 179; 7: 73 s.v. 390; and 20: 128 s.v. 2237; and Ziriklī, *A'lam*, 2: 279. The enormous length, as well as its organization as a title catalogue, sets the *Darfa* apart from the works by Sarkīs and Ziriklī. Since the twenty-nine volumes have been published over a more than fifty-year period since 1936 (Algar, "Āqā Bozorg Tehrānī": 169), Āḡā Buzurg Tihrānī did not provide cross-references to inconsistent data in the different volumes; see, for example the not explained death date 934: Āḡā Buzurg Tihrānī, *Darfa*, 8: 95 s.v. 353. Regarding Āḡā Buzurg Tihrānī's different comments on the death date provided by Ḥ'ānsārī, see above, chapter II, note 165.

61. For example, Suyūṭī, *Muzhir*: "qāla al-Rāḡib fī Mufradāti-hī" (1: 184); and Suyūṭī, *Buḡya*: "kāna fī zannī anna al-Rāḡib mu'tazilī" (296).

Moreover, he presented Rāġib's name in a more confusing manner in the biographical dictionary than in the *Muzhir fī^culūm al-luġa wa-anwā'ihā* (The Luminous Book about the Language Sciences and their Various Branches), a treatise on the Arabic language. In the *Muzhir*, Suyūṭī introduced Rāġib with his full name as the theologian Abū al-Qāsim al-Ḥusain b. Muḥammad b. al-Mufaḍḍal, renowned as Rāġib.⁶² This version, without the *nisba* Iṣfahānī, is identical with the one provided by Ibn Funduq. Afterwards Suyūṭī praised the *Mufradāt* as a reference work for everyone working with the Arabic language because the Koran is the source of everything, from the arguments in *fatwā*, *ḥukm*, and *ḥuṭba* to the rhetorical figures in poetry and prose.⁶³ Suyūṭī's supplementary comments on the man and his work do not suggest that Rāġib was a household name among Mamluk readers. In the *Buġyat*, Suyūṭī himself interchanged the names of grandson and grandfather.⁶⁴ He listed Rāġib under al-Mufaḍḍal and introduced him as al-Mufaḍḍal b. Muḥammad al-Iṣfahānī al-Rāġib, yet Suyūṭī added his *kunya* Abū al-Qāsim only in

62. Suyūṭī, *Muzhir*: “qāla al-imām Abū al-Qāsim al-Ḥusain b. Muḥammad b. al-Mufaḍḍal al-mašhūr bi-l-Rāġib” (1: 201). The used imprint of the *Muzhir* is based on a manuscript that contained a marginal note with more information about Rāġib (1: 201 note 1). Some of these extra data correspond to the details that Suyūṭī included in the Rāġib entry in the *Buġyat*.

63. Suyūṭī, *Muzhir*: “huwa [i.e., Rāġib] min a'immat al-sunna wa-l-balāġa fī ḥuṭba kitābu-hū al-Mufradāt fa-Alfāz al-Qur'ān hiya lubb kalām al-^cArab wa-zubdatu-hū wa-wāsiṭatu-hū karā'imu-hū wa-^calai-hā i'timād al-fuqahā' wa-l-ḥukamā' fī aḥkāmi-him wa-ḥikami-him wa-ilai-hā mafzā^c ḥuzzāq al-^csu'arā' wa-l-bulagā' fī naẓmi-him wa-naṭri-him” He [i.e., Rāġib] belonged to the leading Sunnite theologians, and the rhetoric during the Friday sermon is his book, the *Mufradāt*. The *Alfāz al-Qur'ān* is the marrow and the cream of the Arabs' scholastic theology, its means and its valuables, and jurists and judges rely on it for their sentences and maxims, and proficient poets and masters of rhetoric find in it a refuge for their verse and prose (1: 201).

64. Compare above, chapter II, note 119.

connection with the reference to Rāzī.⁶⁵ Although the variants can be easily explained by Suyūṭī's high literary productivity and the subsequent problems of controlling an ever-expanding oeuvre, as well as the mistakes of later copyists, these variants further support the assumption that Rāḡib's biography was so unknown that there was agreement only on the basic name by which he went.

Suyūṭī's most important contribution to Rāḡib's biography is that he presented the latter as an authority in the fields of Arabic lexicography and rhetoric. Suyūṭī referred to Rāḡib in two works about Arabic philology: the *Muzhir*, his major work on the Arabic language, and the *Buġyat*, a biographical dictionary of lexicographers and linguists.⁶⁶ On the one hand, Suyūṭī mentioned and praised the *Mufradāt alfāz al-Qur'ān* in the *Muzhir*, yet he did not adduce any citation from it.⁶⁷ This treatment of Rāḡib constitutes a clear contrast to other authors, whom Suyūṭī discussed in the *Muzhir*, as well as to Zarkašī, who quoted Rāḡib's works in his Koran commentary without any additional information on the man or his books. On the other hand, Suyūṭī identified three works on lexicography and rhetoric ascribed to Rāḡib in the *Buġyat*, actually spelling out the titles—the *Mufradāt al-Qur'ān*, the *Afānīm al-balāġa*, and the *Muḥāḍarāt*.⁶⁸ Even though Suyūṭī passed over the philosophical treatises and the untitled *tafsīr* and limited the identified titles to Rāḡib's works on the Arabic language, naming those works by title set

65. Suyūṭī, *Buġya*: 296.

66. Suyūṭī, *Muzhir*, 1: 184 and 201; and Suyūṭī, *Buġya*: 296.

67. Suyūṭī, *Muzhir*, 1: 184 and 201.

68. Suyūṭī, *Buġya*: 296. For the problems posed by Suyūṭī's reference to the obscure *Afānīm al-balāġa*, see above, chapter II, note 118.

Suyūṭī apart from his Mamluk colleagues Ḍahabī and Ṣafadī, who did not identify a single title of a work ascribed to Rāḡib in their biographical dictionaries. Taṣkōprūzade and Katip Çelebi who determined the Ottoman reception of Rāḡib adhered to Suyūṭī's evaluation of Rāḡib's scholarly achievements. Taṣkōprūzade even linked the biographical entry about Rāḡib to the mention of the *Muḥāḍarāt*.⁶⁹

Suyūṭī wrote numerous theological works, but he discussed Rāḡib only in his works on Arabic philology. Still, Suyūṭī addressed the question of Rāḡib's Sunnite allegiance head-on, perhaps because it was easier to consider Rāḡib's dogmatic allegiances outside the realm of theology proper. In the *Muzhir*, Suyūṭī introduced Rāḡib as a Sunnite authority without offering any evidence in support of this claim.⁷⁰ In contrast, in the *Buġya*, Suyūṭī admitted that he had believed Rāḡib to be a Mu'tazilite until he learned about Rāzī's high opinion of Rāḡib.⁷¹ Although the reference to Rāzī provided Rāḡib with strong Sunnite credentials, Suyūṭī did not mention Rāḡib's *tafsīr*. The rhetorical context of this omission indicates that Suyūṭī only mentioned works with which he himself was familiar.⁷² His omission of Rāḡib's *tafsīr* suggests that roughly a

69. Ṭāṣkubrīzāde, *Miftāh*, 1: 226–227. In contrast, Katip Çelebi's consequent focus on titles produced a spread of biographical tidbits throughout the catalogue, even though biographical data seemed to be linked to Rāḡib's major works: Ḥāġġī Ḥalīfa, *Kaṣf al-ẓunūn*, 1: 370, 2: 244, 5: 414–415, 5: 616, and 6: 35. Furthermore, the scatter might reflect Katip Çelebi's method of compilation, suggesting that he linked to every title the miscellaneous information preserved in the examined manuscripts.

70. Suyūṭī, *Muzhir*: “wa-huwa min a'immat al-sunna” (1: 201).

71. Suyūṭī, *Buġya*: “kāna fī ẓannī anna al-Rāḡib mu'tazilī ḥattā ra'aitu... ḍikr al-imām Faḥr al-Dīn al-Rāzī fī Ta'sīs al-taqdīs fī al-uṣūl anna Abā al-Qāsim al-Rāḡib min a'immat al-sunna” *I used to think that al-Rāḡib was a Mu'tazilite until I saw... a remark of the leading theologian Faḥr al-Dīn al-Rāzī in the Ta'sīs al-taqdīs fī al-ʿulūm*: “Abū al-Qāsim al-Rāḡib belonged to the leading Sunnite theologians” (296).

72. Suyūṭī, *Buġya*: “la-hū Mufradāt al-Qur'ān wa-Afānīn al-balāġa wa-l-Muḥāḍarāt waqaftu ʿalā al-ṭalāṭa” *He has to his name the Mufradāt al-Qur'ān, Afānīn al-balāġa, and Muḥāḍarāt. I know the three works.* (296).

century after Zarkašī Suyūṭī himself did not have access to a copy of Rāḡib's Koran commentary in Egypt. Otherwise, Suyūṭī's silence about the Koran commentary appears peculiar because Suyūṭī knew Zarkašī's Koran commentary. The *Burhān* had served as the model of Suyūṭī's *Itqān fī 'ulūm al-Qur'ān* (Perfect Mastery Concerning the Sciences of the Koran) so that he knew how Zarkašī drew on Rāḡib's *tafsīr*.⁷³ However, Suyūṭī established another link between Zarkašī and Rāḡib. A handwritten note by Zarkašī, though not scribbled on a copy of Zarkašī's *tafsīr*, brought Rāzī's regard for Rāḡib to Suyūṭī's attention.⁷⁴ Suyūṭī remained the only scholar to offer at least an indirect clue about Zarkašī's interest in Rāḡib's works, yet Ottoman and Safavid scholars did not notice the red herring. Instead, Katip Çelebi suddenly declared that the Shafi'ite jurist 'Abd Allāh b. 'Umar b. Muḥammad b. 'Alī Abū al-Ḥair Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Baidāwī (died 1286, 1293, or 1316) exploited Rāḡib's *tafsīr* in his very popular Koran commentary *Anwār al-tanzīl wa-asrār al-ta'wīl* (Lights of the Revelation and Secrets of the Explication).⁷⁵ Since Rāḡib's *tafsīr* is lost and Baidāwī did not identify his sources, the statement can be neither refuted nor proven.⁷⁶ On the one hand, the alleged connection between Rāḡib and Baidāwī seems salient with regard to the circulation of Rāḡib's works in thirteenth-century Iran because Baidāwī was a Shafi'ite judge in Shiraz, the center of

73. GAL S 2: 108.

74. Suyūṭī, *Buġya*: 296.

75. Hāġġī Ḥalīfa, *Kaṣf al-zunūn*: "wa-huwa [i.e., tafsīr al-Rāḡib] aḥad ma'āhīd Anwār al-tanzīl li-l-Baidāwī" (2: 362).

76. This so conveniently irrefutable claim is not questioned in twentieth-century scholarship: Sārīsī, *Al-Rāḡib al-Iṣfahānī*. 73; and Rowson, "al-Rāḡib al-Iṣfahānī": 390.

the southern Iranian province Fars. Presently there is no other indirect evidence for the reception of any work ascribed to Rāḡib in Iran after the Mongol conquest. This strategic advantage of a connection between Rāḡib and Baiḡāwī is supported by the observation that the Shi'ite authors Afandī and Āḡā Buzurg Tihrānī included Katip Çelebi's assertion in their biographical dictionaries.⁷⁷ On the other hand, an association between Rāḡib and Baiḡāwī seems to provide further ammunition for accusing Rāḡib of Mu'tazilite sympathies because Baiḡāwī's Koran commentary was criticized for Mu'tazilite tendencies.⁷⁸ The strategic disadvantage of associating Rāḡib with Baiḡāwī is suggested by the observation that none of the Katip Çelebi's Sunnite successors kept the reference to Baiḡāwī's Koran commentary.

Suyūṭī relied on the authority of Rāzī and Zarkašī to present Rāḡib as leading Sunnite theologian and Ġazālī's contemporary: Suyūṭī corroborated this claim through carefully distinguishing between direct knowledge and hearsay:

On the back of a manuscript of *al-Qawā'id al-ṣuḡrā* by Ibn 'Abd al-Salām, I saw that which the sheik Badr al-Dīn al-Zarkašī quoted, written by his own hand, as a remark of the leading theologian Faḥr al-Dīn al-Rāzī in the *Ta'sīs al-taqdīs fī al-ʿulūm*: "Abū al-Qāsim al-Rāḡib belonged to the leading Sunnite theologians and his companion was Ġazālī."⁷⁹

This *isnād*-like statement allows the reader to follow the chain of transmission. Suyūṭī's

77. Afandī, *Riyāḍ al-ʿulamā'*, 2: 172; and Āḡā Buzurg Tihrānī, *Ḍarfā*, 5: 45.

78. Robson, "al-Bayḡāwī."

79. Suyūṭī, *Buḡya*: "ra'aitu bi-ḥaṭṭ al-ṣaiḥ Badr al-Dīn al-Zarkašī 'alā zahr nushatan min al-Qawā'id al-ṣuḡrā li-Ibn 'Abd al-Salām mā naṣṣa-hū ḡikr al-imām Faḥr al-Dīn al-Rāzī fī Ta'sīs al-taqdīs fī al-uṣūl anna Abā al-Qāsim al-Rāḡib min a'immat al-sunna wa-qirna-hū bi-l-Ġazālī" (296).

The Shāfi'ite jurist 'Abd al-ʿAzīz b. 'Abd al-Salām al-Sulamī (died 1261) compiled *al-Qawā'id al-ṣuḡrā* (Very Concise Rules), also known as the *Fawā'id fī iḥtiṣār al-maqāṣid* (Benefits Concerning the Abridgment of the Goals), as an abridgment of his *Qawā'id al-aḥkām* (The Rules of Legal Decisions); see: Chaumont, "Sulamī": 813.

attention to the details of substantiation is striking. He underlined that he knew the works by Rāḡib, which he mentioned by title, but he did not claim to have read Rāzī's *Asās al-taqdīs*. This precise method of verification suggests that Suyūṭī was unaware of the relationship between Rāḡib's *DarḤa* and Ġazālī's *Mẓān al-ʿamal* (Scales of Action). Although the authenticity of this ethical treatise has been debated, the dependence of the *Mẓān al-ʿamal* on the *DarḤa* is beyond doubt.⁸⁰ It belongs to the oddities of how Rāḡib's biography gained momentum over the centuries that suddenly in the seventeenth century an anonymous anecdote about Ġazālī's appreciation for Rāḡib's *DarḤa* surfaced in the *Kašf al-zunūn*. According to Katip Çelebi, it was said that Ġazālī used to carry a copy the *DarḤa* with him.⁸¹ That Rāḡib enjoyed some standing as philosopher, perhaps also through the association with Ġazālī, is suggested by a reference to Rāḡib in Ṭabarsī's *Asrār al-imāma*. In the chapter about the various factions—"fī al-firaq wa-l-madāhib"—Ṭabarsī listed some of the first philosophers, and identified Ibn Sīnā (980–1037) as the first Ismāʿīlite, Ġazālī as the first Shafīʿite, and Rāḡib as the first Imamite philosopher.⁸² The list betrays an Iranian, Shiʿite bias, as Ṭabarsī placed the

80. Madelung, "Ar-Rāḡib al-Iṣfahānī": 152–155 and 160–163. Still, Sārīsī does not mention this dependency and thus did not list the *Mẓān al-ʿamal* in his bibliography: Sārīsī, *Al-Rāḡib al-Iṣfahānī*. 57–59 and 293.

81. Hāḡḡī Ḥalīfa, *Kašf al-zunūn*: "qīla anna al-imām Ḥuḡḡat al-Islām al-Ġazālī kāna yastaḥḡibu kitāb al-Darīʿa dāʿiman wa-yastaḥḡsinu-hū li-nafāsati-hī" *It is said that the leading theologian Huḡḡat al-Islām Ġazālī used to carry a copy of the Darīʿa with him and that he appreciated it for its refinement* (3: 334). Nonetheless, this anecdote is not discussed by Madelung, "Ar-Rāḡib al-Iṣfahānī."

82. Ṭabarsī, *Asrār al-imāma*: 513–514. For the reception of Ibn Sīnā in the Safavid empire, compare: Gutas, *Greek Thought*: "The official integration of Avicennan Aristotelianism into mainstream Twelver thought that was to begin with Naṣīr ad-Dīn at-Ṭūsī just when the Mongols were devastating ʿIrāq was to continue throughout the centuries and witness a particular efflorescence in Iran under the Safavids in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries." (172–173).

obscure Rāḡib into the company two intellectual giants. Furthermore seems peculiar that Ṭabarsī identified Ibn Sīnā as Abū °Alī b. Sīnā Ḥusain b. °Abd Allāh, while no further components of their names were added to Ġazālī and Rāḡib.⁸³ This decision appears as a conscious rhetorical device. Ṭabarsī was inconsistent with regard to his identification of two very famous men, Ibn Sīnā and Ġazālī, so that the short form for Rāḡib remained open to interpretation. In the second half of the seventeenth century the Safavid scholar Afandī entered Ṭabarsī's remark about Rāḡib's philosophical Imāmite credentials into the biographical record, though he did not mention a connection between Ġazālī and Rāḡib.⁸⁴

Ṭabarsī's strategy of associating the obscure Rāḡib with famous philosophers, deploying analogy (*qiyās*) to argue Rāḡib's Imāmite affiliations, was not an exception. Muḡāhid, the editor of the seventeenth-century Persian abridgment of the *Muḥāḍarāt*, used excerpts from the *Tabṣirat al-°awām fī ma°rifat maqālāt al-anām* (Instruction for the Common Folks Concerning the Knowledge of the Treatises for All People) by the obscure Murtaḍā b. Dā°ī Rāzī to make the same point.⁸⁵ °Abbās Iqbāl (died 1955) prepared the twentieth-century edition of this work, which appeared in Tehran in 1934. The *Tabṣira* is a fourteenth-century Persian translation of a dogmatic treatise that originated at the beginning of the thirteenth century.⁸⁶ Muḡāhid used three excerpts from

83. Ṭabarsī, *Asrār al-imāma*: 514. Ṭabarsī used the term *ḥakīm* for philosopher and concluded the section with the curious remark that the Greek physician Galen (died c.210–211 CE) was a *ṭabīb* and hence does not belong in this group.

84. Afandī, *Riyāḍ al-°ulamā'*, 2: 172.

85. Rāḡib, *Nawādir*: xi–xii.

86. Rāzī, *Tabṣira*: zā'; compare: Bosworth, "Saldjūkids": 951. Only two copies of the *Tabṣira* imprint of 1934 are currently held in North American collections, and I am very much indebted to Paul T. Keyser for copying the relevant pages from the *Tabṣirat* during one of his trips to Columbia's Butler Library.

the *Tabṣira*. In the first and very short one, Rāḡib is identified as Shafi'ite and the author of the *Muḥāḍarāt*.⁸⁷ In the second excerpt, Abū al-Ḥasan °Alī b. Muḥammad b. Ḥabīb al-Māwardī (974–1058) and Rāḡib are praised as the foremost authorities of the distinct group of jurists who were Shafi'ites as well as Mu'tazilites.⁸⁸ In the last and rather lengthy excerpt, Rāḡib is associated with Faḥr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, Ibn Sīna, and Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī (died 950).⁸⁹ The Imamite viewpoint that all authoritative texts advocate to some degree corrupt principles of faith grants an exception to the Koran commentaries by Rāḡib and Faḥr al-Dīn al-Rāzī. This praise culminates in the consideration that Rāḡib and Faḥr al-Dīn al-Rāzī are the true successors of the philosophers Ibn Sīna and Fārābī, even if this high estimation is not shared by non-Imamites. Since Muḡāhid did not comment on either author or work, he seems to imply that he was relying on a well-known source with no need for further explication. Yet Muḡāhid was the first scholar to refer to this treatise in connection with Rāḡib's dogmatic allegiance. Moreover, Muḡāhid's choice of excerpts from the *Tabṣira* is highly problematic because these excerpts do not provide any evidence whatsoever for how Murtaḍā b. Dā'ī Rāzī formed

87. Rāḡib, *Nawādir*: xi; freely quoting Rāzī, *Tabṣira*: 103.

88. Rāḡib, *Nawādir*: xi–xii; quoting Rāzī, *Tabṣira*: 98–99.

89. Rāḡib, *Nawādir*: “wa-l-‘aḡab ke Rāḡib az kibār-i mutaqaḍḍimān-i aṣḥāb-i Šāfi‘ī ast u-Faḥr Rāzī az muta’ahḥirān. u-har yak tafsīr-i karde’ and u-dar ān-ḡā čīz-hā gūyand ke hīč muslimān itlāq-i ān lafz-hā u-suḥan-hā dar tafsīr-i Qur’ān bāwar nadārand. u-aṣḥāb-i īṣān īn aṣḥāṣ-rā az muḥaqqiqān dānand u-suḥan-i īṣān-rā nām-i ḥaqqā’iq karde bāšand. lāzim āyad ke hīč kas-rā bar ahl-i Islām ān minnat nabāšad ke Abū °Alī Sīnā u-Abū Naṣr Fārābī-rā bāšad ke manba‘-i ān ke īṣān ḥaqqā’iq mīh‘ānand īnān-and ke az muta’ahḥirān-i falāsife bāšand” *Strange that Rāḡib is among the distinguished predecessors of the Shafi'ite masters and Faḥr al-Dīn al-Rāzī among their successors. Each of them wrote a commentary, and they say things there that no Muslim accepts as the meaning of those words and phrases in explicating the Koran. Their masters know that these men belong to the searchers of truth, and would consider their remarks true facts. Without question, the community of Muslims owes no one a greater debt than it owes to Abū °Alī b. Sīnā and Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī, for they, who are among the later philosophers, are the source of what they call the true facts.* (xii; quoting Rāzī, *Tabṣira*: 175).

his opinions about Rāḡib. If the *Tabṣira* were written in the first half of the fourteenth century, how is it that, more than a century before Suyūṭī, Rāḡib was already claimed as both Shafī'ite and Mu'tazilite, and linked to both the *Muḥāḍarāt* and a Koran commentary?⁹⁰ Among the admittedly scattered references to Rāḡib, the statements from the *Tabṣira* represent the only explicit claim that Rāḡib was actually Shafī'ite as well as Mu'tazilite. Without further investigation into this obscure source it is also impossible to determine how its Imamite agenda fits into the overall development of Imamite theology. Despite these imponderable questions, Muḡāhid's use of this treatise is significant. It suggests the continuity of an Iranian Imamite tradition of leaning on Rāḡib's association with various famous philosophers without drawing on the actual textual dependence of Ḡazālī's *Mẓān* on Rāḡib's *DarḤa*.

III. d. The quest for functional data about Raḡib's contemporaries in Buyid Iran

Since the sixteenth century scholars in Islamic societies, as well as western Arabists, have worked with the suggestions and data collected by Suyūṭī to explicitly argue for Rāḡib's Shi'ite and Imāmite credentials or to silently claim him as Sunnite. Nothing was added to the biographical record. Instead, Ṭāškubrīzāde, Katip Çelebi, Flügel, Ahlwardt, Ismail Paşa, Sarkīs, Brockelmann, Āḡā Buzurg Tihrānī, and Ziriklī shuffled the scanty data around, suddenly with the *Muḥāḍarāt* receiving a lot of attention among the works

90. The Shafī'ite Suyūṭī was the first to mention the *Muḥāḍarāt* in a biographical dictionary, so that pigeonholing Rāḡib as Shafī'ite and the author of the *Muḥāḍarāt* appears as one of the possible conclusions only to be drawn from Rāḡib's entry in the *Buḡya*. Furthermore, none of the other known references before and after Suyūṭī claimed Rāḡib as Shafī'ite, even though the Shafī'ite Zarkaṣī quoted Rāḡib's Koran commentary.

ascribed to Rāġib. As already discussed in the previous chapter, the Shi'ite scholars Afandī, Ḥwānsārī, °Amilī, and Mudarris did not approach the anthology as a textbook, but scrutinized it as a personal statement of faith. None of these Shi'ite authors made the historical argument that in the second half of the tenth and the first half of the eleventh century, when Rāġib was assumed to have lived in Isfahan, the Shi'ite Buyids repeatedly conquered and ruled the city.⁹¹ A different approach to Rāġib's biography was practiced in the twentieth century. Muḥammad Qazwīnī, Madelung, and Sārīsī argued with internal evidence from works ascribed to Rāġib to place him among Buyid scholars of the late tenth or early eleventh century. These three scholars seemed to have been unaware of each other's findings.

Qazwīnī and Madelung argued with excerpts from the *Muḥāḍarāt*, and both adduced a passage Ḥwānsārī had already quoted in the *Rauḍāt al-ġannāt*.⁹² In this passage from the first chapter, a deceased sheikh Abū al-Qāsim and Abū al-Qāsim b. Abī al-°Alā' exchanged verses about the lending of books.⁹³ Both scholars identified sheikh Abū al-Qāsim with Rāġib and Abū al-Qāsim b. Abī al-°Alā' with the poet Abū al-Qāsim Ġānim b. Muḥammad b. Abī al-°Alā' al-Iṣfahānī (died after 1033), but neither mentioned the use of the eulogy *rahīma-hū Allāh* after the name sheikh Abū al-Qāsim. This eulogy is, of

91. Lambton, "Iṣfahān": 100.

92. Ḥwānsārī, *Rauḍāt*, 3: 199–201; Qazwīnī, *Yād dāst-hā*, 5: 13; and Madelung, "Ar-Rāġib al-Iṣfahānī": 156. However, Ḥwānsārī quoted this passage within his discussion of the religious justifications of poetry and did not use it to determine when Rāġib was active. Muġāhid referred to this passage as the only instance of Rāġib quoting himself: Rāġib, *Nawādir*: xi.

93. Rāġib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ed. Beirut, 1: 118–120; compare: Rāġib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ed. Samalūṭī, 1: 72; and Rāġib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ed. Faiyūmī, 1: 55.

course, a scribe's addition to the text, because the dead do not compile anthologies. The already discussed confusion about Rāḡib's full name, however, makes the scribe's addition noteworthy, especially since the indirect evidence suggests that the use of the *ism* or *laqab* Rāḡib appears to have been more widespread than the use of the *kunya* Abū al-Qāsim. But Rāḡib's full name stands at the beginning of the introduction in the nineteenth- and twentieth-century imprints of the complete *Muḥāḍarāt*, which are the editions quoted by Qazwīnī and Madelung.⁹⁴ The text of these editions thus suggests identifying a deceased sheikh Abū al-Qāsim with Rāḡib. In contrast, the reader of Zaidān's abridgment cannot reach the same conclusion because Zaidān did not include Rāḡib's full name anywhere in his version of the anthology, not even on the title page, and dropped the eulogy after sheikh Abū al-Qāsim.⁹⁵ Although the editors of the various *Muḥāḍarāt* imprints disagreed whether Rāḡib quoted himself as sheikh Abū al-Qāsim, no one consulted works other than the *Muḥāḍarāt* or its manuscript copies to corroborate or reject this conclusion. Adducing manuscript evidence to answer this question is impossible because the extant manuscripts of the various works, including the *Muḥāḍarāt*, ascribed to Rāḡib have not all been analyzed in detail. However, the example of the complete seventeenth-century codex in Tehran suggests that the answer to

94. Rāḡib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ed. Samalūṭī, 1: 2 and 72; Rāḡib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ed. Faiyūmī, 1: 2 and 55; and Rāḡib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ed. Beirut, 1: 7 and 119. That the imprints of the complete anthology agree with regard to these editorial decisions is further evidence for their dependency, discussed above, chapter II, note 66. The exclusive use of imprints, however, is mentioned as caveat by Madelung, "Ar-Rāḡib al-Iṣfahānī": 157 note 33.

95. Rāḡib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ed. Zaidān: 52.

this question was not even obvious in the seventeenth century.⁹⁶ On the title page the author's name is given as al-Rāḡib al-Iṣbahānī, and on the next page the author's name was not repeated at the beginning of the introduction. In the second *ḥadd*, the eulogy *aiyada-hū Allāh ta'ālā* followed the name sheikh Abū al-Qāsim, while only a marginal note, which later was partially cut off for a binding, identified sheikh Abū al-Qāsim as the anthology's author Rāḡib, without offering any explanation or evidence for this identification. This conjecture is quite sensible, if seen in connection with how manuscripts were used and transmitted. The first and the last pages of manuscripts, even in bound copies, are the ones most likely to get damaged by wear and tear. Many authors thus used every opportunity to insert their names as often as possible into their works, irrespective of having already identified themselves in the introduction.⁹⁷ Multiple references to an author dramatically improve the odds that authorship can be determined, even if a manuscript is severely damaged or has been divided into fragments. Although this premodern practice of asserting authorship throughout a work's manuscript does not provide any evidence as to whether Rāḡib referred to himself as sheikh Abū al-Qāsim in the *Muḥāḍarāt*, it directs attention to the otherwise easily overlooked absence of any other instance in which Rāḡib seems to mention himself in his anthology.

Qazwīnī did not use any other evidence from the *Muḥāḍarāt* to reject Suyūṭī's suggestion that Rāḡib was alive at the beginning of the twelfth century. Yet Madelung

96. Tehran, Kitābhāne-yi markazī-yi Dānišgāh-i Tihirān, MS arab. 1884. With regard to the absence of foliation and pagination, see above, chapter II, note 30.

97. This practice was deployed by authors of Arabic and Persian works alike, and hence appears as having been independent of the distinct literary conventions of Arabic and Persian. Rāwandī, for example, repeatedly mentioned both his name and the title of his work in the *Rāḡat*; see below, note 117.

combed the anthology for more names. In the section on medicine and physicians in the sixth chapter, he found an anecdote about an official who was known by the fairly common *laqab* °Ain al-Daula.⁹⁸ Despite the lack of any further information about this man in the text of the *Muḥāḍarāt* itself, Madelung identified him as the Buyid prince Abū Šuġā° Būya, a son of °Alī b. Rukn al-Daula Ḥasan Abū al-Ḥasan Faḥr al-Daula, the ruler of the province Jibal between 977 and 997.⁹⁹ Madelung speculated further that the anecdote, in which °Ain al-Daula is the butt of a joke about an enema,¹⁰⁰ was more likely to have originated after the official's death and therefore Rāġib probably compiled the *Muḥāḍarāt* after his demise. On the one hand, Madelung admitted that no date of death is known for Abū Šuġā° Būya. But, on the other, Madelung tried to enhance the probability of this guesswork through adding another conjecture. He argued that Rāġib was educated in Isfahan and stayed there when he was compiling the *Muḥāḍarāt* because many stories report events from Isfahan and a great number of the compiled verses were composed by tenth- and eleventh century poets from Isfahan. Madelung limited himself to making this claim, which he did not bolster with any statistics, names, or excerpts from the anthology.

Sārīsī detected in the *Maġma° al-balāġa* and the *Muḥāḍarāt* two distichs ascribed

98. Madelung, “Ar-Rāġib al-Iṣfahānī”: 157; and Rāġib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ed. Beirut, 2: 436. For compound honorifics with *daula*, see: Bosworth, “Laqab”: 622–623.

99. No Būya b. Faḥr al-Daula Abū Šuġā° °Ain al-Daula is listed among the members of the Buyid branch in Jibal by Bosworth, *New Islamic Dynasties*: 154.

100. The rubric under which this anecdote was subsumed contains three stories about how men deal in different ways with an enema, ranging from ignorance and fear to sexual slander. The story about °Ain al-Daula is the second: “wa-kāna °Ain al-Daula aṣāba-hū maġs fa-ušīru °alai-hī bi-l-ḥuqna fa-abā wa-tafādā min-hā fa-lammā ištadda bi-hī al-waġa° qāla yā qaum adḥilū hādā al-ġid° fī istī wa-arīḥū-nī fa-ḥuqina wa-bari’a” *A colic had befallen °Ain al-Daula, and the physician suggested to him an enema. He scorned and put it off. When his pain worsened, he said: OK guys, put this tree stump into my buttock and set me at ease! He had the enema and recovered.* (Rāġib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ed. Beirut, 2: 436).

to Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm. But the man's title and name are not identical in the two works. He is called "[a]l-ustād al-ra'īs Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm" in the *Mağma^c al-balāğa*,¹⁰¹ but "al-wazīr al-ra'īs Abū al-°Abbās Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm" in the *Muḥāḍarāt*.¹⁰² Sārīsī weighed this evidence without scrutinizing the historical processes of manufacture and transmission that provided him with two manuscript copies of the *Mağma^c al-balāğa* and the Beirut edition of the *Muḥāḍarāt*. Instead he synthesized the evidence and considered the two titles *al-ustād al-ra'īs* and *al-wazīr al-ra'īs* and the *kunya* Abū al-°Abbās sufficient proof for identifying Aḥmad b. Ibrāhīm as Abū al-°Abbās al-Ḍabbī (died 1008), the successor of the Buyid vizier and man of letters al-Ṣāhib b. °Abbad (c.938–995). Sārīsī even speculated that Abū al-°Abbās al-Ḍabbī was the anonymous patron of the *Mağma^c al-balāğa*.¹⁰³ His indifference to source criticism is surprising since he prepared the edition of the *Mağma^c al-balāğa* parallel to his study of Rāḡib's contribution to philology and literature.¹⁰⁴ Sārīsī searched libraries in Cairo and Istanbul for manuscripts and imprints of works ascribed to Rāḡib, some of which he included in his findings,¹⁰⁵ yet with regard

101. Rāḡib, *Mağma^c*, 2: 681; the distich about the relationship between tears and blood stands in thirteenth chapter, in a section about crying and tears.

102. Rāḡib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ed. Beirut: 4: 608; the distich about the desert's darkness appears in a section about the desert.

103. Rāḡib, *Mağma^c*, 1: 29 and 36 note 6; and Sārīsī, *Al-Rāḡib al-Isfahānī*: 35–37, especially 36 for the list of five dedication phrases found in works ascribed to Rāḡib, which undermine Sārīsī's argument. For the dedication phrase in the *Muḥāḍarāt*, see above, chapter II, note 31. Sārīsī's speculations have been repeated by Rowson, "al-Rāḡib al-Isfahānī": 389; and Thomas, "Concept of *Muḥāḍara*": 154.

104. Both the study and the edition were requirements for Sārīsī's Ph.D., which he received in 1977 from the University °Ain Shams in Cairo (Rāḡib, *Mağma^c*, 1: 2; compare: Sārīsī, *Al-Rāḡib al-Isfahānī*: 87).

105. Compare, for example: Sārīsī, *Al-Rāḡib al-Isfahānī*: 74–75 (*Durrat tanzīl*), and 84 (*Mufradāt*).

to the *Muḥāḍarāt* he treated the Beirut edition as the original version of the text that Rāḡib had compiled in the late tenth or early eleventh century.¹⁰⁶

Sārisī's attitude toward source criticism is identical with how Qazwīnī and Madelung used quotes from the *Muḥāḍarāt* as historical evidence. Their common approach to the anthology as historical evidence is instructive with regard to the fundamental problems of how to conduct research of medieval Arabic and Persian literatures. The absence of any securely datable evidence for Rāḡib's life endows the works ascribed to Rāḡib with the preciousness of rare biographical sources. But using seemingly factual information that appears in these works, such as names, as functional data of Rāḡib's life and of his contemporaries presupposes theories of composition and transmission. The theory of composition concerns the criteria according to which Rāḡib chose his sources for the *Muḥāḍarāt*. Textbooks tend to be conservative in their selection of instruction material because they only emerge after a field of knowledge and its acknowledged concepts of knowledge are recognized among a group of practitioners.¹⁰⁷ The theory of transmission examines how during a time span of almost a thousand years the work composed by Rāḡib was passed on to the next generations. Adducing

106. There is no mention of any manuscript or imprint of the *Muḥāḍarāt* aside from the Beirut edition: Sārisī, *Al-Rāḡib al-Isfahānī*. 85–87 and 288 s.v. 14.

107. Kuhn, *Structure*: "textbooks of science... address themselves to an already articulated body of problems, data, and theory, most often to the particular set of paradigms to which the scientific community is committed at the time they are written. ... [They] record the stable *outcome* of past revolutions and thus display the bases of the current normal-scientific tradition." (136–137); compare: "Scientists... never learn concepts, laws, and theories in the abstract and by themselves. Instead these intellectual tools are from the start encountered in a historically and pedagogically prior unit that displays them with and through their applications." (46); and "When the individual scientist can take a paradigm for granted, he need no longer, in his major works, attempt to build his field anew, starting from first principles and justifying the use of each concept introduced. That can be left to the writer of textbooks." (19–20).

remarkably short names and common titles from a twentieth-century imprint as evidence for Rāḡib's contemporaries postulates that the chain of evidence has not been interrupted, and hence that Rāḡib's late-tenth or early eleventh-century original has been preserved without any minor or major corruption in its twentieth-century version. Unfortunately, Madelung and Sārīsī did not discuss their implicit assumptions that Rāḡib included the most recent literature in the *Muḥāḡarāt*, and thus could not develop any argument regarding why Rāḡib presented his readers not only a summary of the well-established canon, but also glimpses of contemporary developments. Since Qazwīnī, Madelung, and Sārīsī did not descend into the quagmire of source criticism, they could not find any textual evidence for at least plausible speculations. Hypotheses that are not discussed are immune to rejection, yet inaccessible to validation. Given the diverse problems posed by the Islamic manuscript tradition, apprehensions about source criticism are easy to understand and accordingly widespread.¹⁰⁸ But by dismissing any impediments to the construction of how Rāḡib first compiled the *Muḥāḡarāt* and how the anthology afterwards circulated in Islamic societies, Qazwīnī, Madelung, and Sārīsī precluded from the outset any chance to determine more precisely both that which is currently assumed proven knowledge and that which is still considered beyond the grasp of scholarship and research.

108. No connection is perceived between the methodological question of how to edit Arabic literature and our spotty knowledge of preserved Arabic manuscripts—especially if compared with the thorough knowledge of the preserved sources for the Latin West—by M.G. Carter in Greetham, *Scholarly Editing*: 554–557 and 559.

III. e. Dogma versus patronage

Two interrelated aspects of how Rāḡib's biography evolved as a secondary phenomenon are striking. Until the twentieth century, scholars in Islamic societies showed little interest in speculating about non-existing facts to place Rāḡib into a concrete historical context, such as Isfahan in the tenth and eleventh centuries. These scholars did not search for patrons and courts that might have sponsored Rāḡib's intellectual activities. Instead, non-Shi'ites claimed the Arabic works ascribed to Rāḡib as part of the literary heritage of Arab-Islamic civilization, whereas Shi'ites labored to show that the absence of decisive statements about dogmatic issues left at least wriggle room for doubting Rāḡib's Sunnite allegiances. In this debate, Shi'ite scholars took advantage of the opening resulting from the discussion of Rāḡib's Mu'tazilite sympathies, as mentioned by the Shafi'ite Suyūṭī and suggested by the unprovable association with Baiḡāwī, a Shafi'ite accused of Mu'tazilite tendencies. The speculation operated through an invalid syllogism that first equated a Mu'tazilite position with anti-Ḥanbalite and anti-Sunnite positions, then substituted anti-Sunnite with pro-Shi'ite, and finally narrowed Shi'ite to Imāmite to nationalize Rāḡib and claim him as an Iranian author. In contrast, twentieth-century Arabists focused on the question of when Rāḡib might have lived. These scholars strove to show that Rāḡib was more likely alive in the second half of the tenth than in the second half of eleventh century. According to the conventional approach to Arab-Islamic literature, Arabists are still privileging the ninth and tenth centuries as the so-called Golden Age of the Abbasid caliphate so that late tenth-century authors enjoy a higher standing than late eleventh-century authors, who were already dangerously close to the

alleged onset of decadence and decline that appeared to have preceded the Mongol conquest of the thirteenth century. Among academics, the study of minor authors carries much less prestige than research on the so-called classical tradition of so-called Islamic Humanism.¹⁰⁹ Since Arabists consider the active patronage of the Abbasid court one very important reason for the blossoming of Arabic letters and sciences in the ninth and tenth centuries, any evidence that could link an alleged late-tenth-century author to the patronage of a documented personality connected with the Abbasid court and administration, if not with a member of the Abbasid family itself, would immediately enhance the author's credentials.

This juxtaposition illustrates why twentieth-century Arabists went away empty-handed from the available Arabic and Persian evidence. However, it also raises the question of how to interpret the fact that, unlike their later colleagues, the authors of the earlier Arabic and Persian sources did not see any obligation to locate Rāḡib at any concrete court or to identify a specific patron. It is tempting to turn this sanguine silence into an argument *ex nihilo* for the existence of a non-elite book culture, outside or parallel to noble patronage, that was taken for granted and hence not worth commenting upon. Unfortunately, having no data at all is a very weak foundation for any argument. The preserved evidence, however, indicates only that in the eleventh century various works

109. Since the study of literature is usually justified with the intrinsic value of a work, the following observation about the ranking of scientific research also applies to literary criticism: Kuhn, *Structure*: "A part of normal theoretical work... consists simply in the use of existing theory to predict factual information of intrinsic value. The manufacture of astronomical ephemerides, the computation of lens characteristics, and the propagation of radio propagation curves are examples of problems of this sort. Scientists, however, generally regard them as hack work to be relegated to engineers or technicians. ... Their purpose is to display a new application of the paradigm or to increase the precision of an application that has already been made." (30).

ascribed to Rāḡib surfaced in Isfahan and soon afterwards circulated in western and eastern Iran, as well as in Egypt and Syria. Although these data seem to imply the existence of an intellectual who made a living writing textbooks for non-elite audiences, this conjecture is fraught with practical problems. The concept of a textbook author who writes books like factory workers assemble cars is quite modern and therefore does not explain how in medieval Islamic societies without copyright and royalties an author actually secured a living by writing books.¹¹⁰ Scribes, bookbinders, and booksellers cooperated to manufacture books for sale, while students and scholars copied the books they studied and wanted to own whenever their means did not allow purchasing them.¹¹¹ The beauty of the model of the privately sponsored author is that it elegantly explains how intellectuals made ends meet within the realms of splendid courts without assuming that these more or less brilliant men were eking out an income as scribes, teachers, and tutors in less affluent neighborhoods.¹¹²

Ultimately, using the popularity of various Arabic works and scattered references to their author Rāḡib to imagine the life of a man in eleventh-century Isfahan raises

110. For the various forms of income and gainful employment, available in medieval Islamic societies, for intellectuals, be they jurists, physicians, scholars, or poets, on the one hand, and for the practice of self-teaching, as well as examples of manuals written for the autodidact, on the other, see: Makdisi, *Rise of Humanism*: 60–66, 241–247, and 217–229.

111. For a sketch of how book manufacture was organized in medieval Islamic societies, as well as examples of scholars and authors who survived through copying texts, see: Makdisi, *Rise of Humanism*: 262–271, especially 266–269.

112. For the importance of aesthetic considerations for the conception of arguments, see: Welsch, *Grenzgänge*: “In neuerer Zeit hat dann Watsons Hinweis bahnbrechend gewirkt, daß ihm die Entschlüsselung der DNS-Struktur nur deshalb gelang, weil er davon ausging, daß die Lösung äußerst elegant werden müssen – nur unter dieser ästhetischen Prämisse vermochte er in angemessener Zeit unter der großen Zahl theoretisch offenstehender Lösungswege den zutreffenden zu finden.” (92).

questions about how these Arabic works fit into western Iran before the Mongol conquest. The acquisition of literary Arabic occupied, and continues to occupy, an important place within the curricula of religious and legal education in Islamic societies across the *umma*.¹¹³ Consequently, a textbook of literary Arabic, such as the *Muḥāḍarāt*, cannot be taken as evidence for an environment dominated by spoken languages other than Arabic. While the question of Rāḡib's dogmatic allegiances became an important issue for scholars with a Shi'ite axe to grind, these authors did not pay attention to the language of the works ascribed to Rāḡib. Moreover, they did not venture any speculation about Rāḡib's lineage. The uncertainty about Rāḡib's full name, the only constant component of which is the *kunya* Abū al-Qāsim, makes it impossible to use components of his Arabic names to argue for ties to Iranian clans, such as the Daylamite Buyids, on the one hand, or to Turkish clans, such as the Great Seljuqs of the Oghuz clan, on the other. This reluctance might reflect the fluidity of political rule over the factionalized society of western Iran during the tenth and eleventh centuries.¹¹⁴ In 927, the Buyids conquered Isfahan for the first time and defended their control of the province Jibal for almost a century. In 1029, Maḥmūd b. Sebūktigin (ruled 998–1030) conquered Isfahan, and until 1036 Buyid troops fought against the Ghaznavid occupation of Isfahan. Moreover, since the beginning of the eleventh century, the Seljuqs were present in western Iran, though only in 1043 did Tuḡril I (ruled 1040–1063) began to lay claim to

113. Eickelman, *Knowledge*: 87–88 and 102 note 12; Makdisi, *Rise of Humanism*: 48–54 and 60; and Messick, *Calligraphic State*: 91. For the occurrence of subjects, such as poetry and history, in medieval curricula, see the sample curricula from biographical dictionaries: Makdisi, *Rise of Colleges*: 81–84.

114. Lambton, "Iṣfahān": 100–101; compare: Bosworth, "Salḡūkids": 938–939.

Isfahan. The impossibility of asserting even one specific detail of Rāḡib's life appears then as the result of three different circumstances. The first is the political instability of the tenth and eleventh centuries in western Iran. To evaluate fairly the paucity of information about Rāḡib, one must recognize that political crises generally lower the probability of written sources being preserved because warfare wreaks havoc in both human and economic terms. Second, Rāḡib did not leave any traces in sources that originated among the ruling elites of his time. Although this absence of references cannot be converted into an argument, it is essential for a balanced interpretation of the available references to Rāḡib to remember that very few people ever enter the historical record of their time by name. Finally, Rāḡib did not forge a close connection between himself and his works, such as the *Muḥāḍarāt*. Since the conventions of Arabic literature and manuscript manufacture provided Rāḡib with opportunities to do so in introductions and through internal references, it appears to be the author's conscious decision to not utilize them, even though Rāḡib's rationale cannot be ascertained.

III. f. A Persian plea for patronage

The fortuitous survival of a copy of the *Rāḡat*, the circulation of which was discussed in the previous chapter, constitutes our only source of details about the life of Naḡm al-Dīn Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. ʿAlī b. Sulaimān al-Rāwandī have also survived. Except for the name one of his maternal uncles, these details are not corroborated by any other source.

Drawing on the Persian conventions of literary patronage,¹¹⁵ Rāwandī composed for the *Rāḥat* an autobiographical statement, divided into three sections, in which he related his professional achievements, argued for the possible relevance of his work to his dedicatee, the Rum Seljuq sultan Kai Ḥusrau, and explained the choice of his dedicatee.¹¹⁶

Rāwandī's concern for being identified as both author of the *Rāḥat* and petitioner to Kai Ḥusrau is otherwise reflected by the repeated insertion of his full name, and by referring to himself again and again as “du‘āgūy-i daulat.”¹¹⁷ These were both standard practices.

As mentioned above with regard to the curious absence of Rāgīb's name in the *Muḥāḍarāt*, multiple occurrences of an author's name were an efficient way of improving the odds that, despite damaged manuscripts and scribal mistakes, the original author of a

115. A later example of an author's detailed autobiographical note within a long introduction, albeit as a marginal note rather than an integral part of the text is the case of Ibn Aidamir (died 1310). Working for the Ilkhanid administration, the Turk Ibn Aidamir compiled an Arabic anthology of single lines titled *al-Durr al-farīd* (The Unique Pearl). In a recent article on the anthology's section on stylistics and poetics, Geert Jan van Gelder did not comment on the occurrence of an autobiographical note in an Arabic anthology, but was irritated by the introduction's unusual length, and assumed that the foliation of the incomplete autograph <sic> is wrong: Gelder, “Arabic Poetics”: 383–385 and 387–388; compare the facsimile edition: Ibn Aidamir, *Al-Durr al-farīd*: 9 (fol.19r). As a Persian counterexample, which might represent the exception to the rule, appears the unique manuscript of an illustrated miscellany of allegorical narratives from sixteenth-century Bukhara. Nizām al-Dīn Amīr Ni‘mat Allāh, known as Ḥalīfe, a prince and Sufi at the Shaybanid court of ‘Abd Allāh b. Iskandar (died 1599), compiled this miscellany at his own initiative and did not bother to introduce himself to his readers. For an analysis of the manuscript, see: Melikian-Chirvani, “*Anthology*.”

116. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: “dīkr-i aḥwāl-i muṣannif-i kitāb” (38–58), “sabab-i tālīf-i īn kitāb” (57–68 and 457–459), and “dīkr-i ḥ‘āb” (459–464). I consider the survey of contents (63–68) an integral component of the second section, while I take the concluding panegyric *qaṣīda* dedicated to Kai Ḥusrau (464–467) as the final *du‘ā* of the whole work, and not as the final *du‘ā* of the *ḥasb-i ḥāl*.

117. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: 1 (title page with both the full title of the work and the full name of the author including *laqab* and *kunya*); 27 (Rāwandī as petitioner and the author of an apotropaic *qaṣīda*); 38–39 (Rāwandī as the *Rāḥat*'s author and his full name including *laqab* and *kunya*); 49 (full title of the work); 54 (Rāwandī's intention to emulate the achievements of his uncle Zain al-Dīn); 58, 62, 64, 344 (Rāwandī as author of the *Rāḥat*); 66, 446 (Rāwandī as petitioner); 84 (Rāwandī as petitioner and author of the *Rāḥat*); 193 (short title of the work); 352 (Rāwandī as petitioner and as author of the book and an elegy); 357 (Rāwandī as the *Rāḥat*'s author, petitioner, and his maternal uncle Zain al-Dīn), and passim.

work would remain identifiable. Since social protocol demanded expressions of humility when persons of lower rank addressed persons of higher rank, Rāwandī went to great lengths to insure that his name and his intentions as petitioner were preserved in the *Rāḥat*. He divided the autobiographical statement into three continuous sections but inserted the three parts on justice, the institutional history of the Great Seljuq sultanate, and courtly education, which are the main text of the miscellany,¹¹⁸ into the second section, between the explanation of the contents and the justification for omitting some of the initially planned chapters.

Rāwandī submitted the *Rāḥat* as petitioner to Kai Ḥusrau.¹¹⁹ At a first glance, Rāwandī buried a few functional data, such as names, years, or, place names, under an enormous mass of extraneous matter. For example, he mentioned his maternal grandfather—Muḥammad b. °Alī b. Aḥmad al-Rāwandī—just in passing; this reference does not even occur within the autobiographical statement, but in connection with the transmission of a *ḥadīth* about Abū Ḥanīfa al-Nu°mān b. Tābit al-Kūfī (c.699–767).¹²⁰ Yet Rāwandī’s approach to personal data becomes much less puzzling if seen as an expression of the Persian protocol for formal writing that regulated the uses of eulogy (*ḥamdala*), intercession (*tarḥīm*), invocation (*du°ā*), and panegyric (*madḥ*), which seemingly privileged ceremony over concern for functional data. Accordingly, praise of

118. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: 68–84 (justice), 85–405 (institutional history), and 405–457 (courtly education).

119. This interpretation of the *Rāḥat* was first suggested by Luther, “Islamic Rhetoric”: 95. For the opinion that Luther’s understanding falls short of Rāwandī’s moralistic agenda, see: Meisami, *Persian Historiography*: 246.

120. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: “u-pidar-i mādar-am... Muḥammad b. °Alī b. Aḥmad al-Rāwandī... riwāyat kard az...” *The father of my mother...Muḥammad b. °Alī b. Aḥmad al-Rāwandī... transmitted about...* (17).

the dedicatee Kai Ḥusrau frames Rāwandī's autobiographical statement. The introductory panegyric mixes prose and verse, as well as Arabic and Persian, while the concluding panegyric consists of a Persian *qaṣīda*.¹²¹ In contrast, the autobiographical statement itself is interwoven with invocations that mark the text's divisions because they function as both separators and transitions.¹²² The apparent imbalance between ceremony and functional data documents Rāwandī's focus on the primary goal of securing the support of his dedicatee. The pragmatic efficiency of a plea for patronage would surely be enhanced, if the petitioner's claims were based on reality and stood up to scrutiny. Unfortunately, the most impressive achievements were nevertheless likely to go unnoticed if the dedicatee's attention was not captured first. Thus, Rāwandī did not compose a story about coming of age in western Iran, complete with details, such as place of birth, childhood, or information about parents and siblings.

The organization of Rāwandī's autobiographical statement is determined by the strategic decision to develop a convincing argument as to why the dedicatee Kai Ḥusrau should extend his support to this foreigner from western Iran. Rāwandī authenticated the claims about his education and work experience by means that do not conform to our

121. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: 18–38 and 464–467; Rāwandī himself used the terms *madḥ* (63 line 7) and *du'ā'* (458 lines 4–5), when referring to the introductory and the concluding passages directly addressed to Kai Ḥusrau.

122. The observation raises the question of whether Rāwandī designed the rubricated headings in the unique manuscript as an additional orientation device for the reader or whether the scribe of this unique copy decided to insert them as an additional reader-friendly feature. This question, however, is unanswerable because there is no other copy of the text to which the unique manuscript could be compared. But with regard to the miscellany's institutional history, Rāwandī stated explicitly that he employed invocation and panegyric poetry as separators: Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: “dar āḥir-i dīkr-i har sulṭānī du'ā'-yi pādīshāh-i Kaiḥusrau bigūyam u-qaṣīde-yi madḥ-i ū” and at the end of the account of every reign let me say an invocation on behalf of the monarch Kai Ḥusrau and a poem in his praise (63).

contemporary standards of historical research.¹²³ On the one hand, he identified his teachers and patrons. On the other hand, he quoted poetry, which was recited, perhaps even composed, in connection with a specific incident, and identified eye witnesses, such as the poetry's addressee and men in the audience. But the deliberate omission of functional data, such as the death dates of his two uncles or his exact employment dates, suggests that such details did not add weight to his plea for patronage.

III. g. Qualifications

In the first section—"dīkr-i aḥwāl-i muṣannif-i kitāb u-ṭanā-yi dūstān u-ustādān-aš"¹²⁴—Rāwandī sketched his education and praised his friends and teachers. This section consists of three subsections, a structure that allows Rāwandī to clearly distinguish his education, his work experience, and his potential value to his dedicatee Kai Ḥusrau. All three subsections culminate in situations that are relevant to both Rāwandī's plea for patronage and the *Rāḥat*'s dedication to Kai Ḥusrau. The three subsections end with invocations that not only provide a conclusion but also serve as transition.

Table 7. The first autobiographical section of the *Rāḥat*.

Training

i Education in Isfahan until the famine of 1174/1175 = **p.38–39**

ii Apprenticeship with his maternal uncle Abū al-Faḍl = **p.39–41**

< Insertion: *du'ā'* on behalf of Abū Faḍl >

123. For a survey of how footnotes became the major device of scientifically documenting a modern historian's sources and thus authenticating his statements, see: Grafton, *Footnote*.

124. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: 38.

Work experience

- iii Calligrapher in the workshop of his maternal uncle Zain al-Dīn at the court of Ṭuḡril III in Hamadan = p.41–45
 - iv Mentor of the sons of °Arab Šāh in Hamadan = p.45–47
 - v Apprenticeship and friendship with Aḥmad al-Bazzāz = p.47–51
- < Insertion: *du°ā* on behalf of Aḥmad al-Bazzāz >

Applicability of training and work experience to the situation of his dedicatee Kai Ḥusrau

- vi Rāwandī's role model Zain al-Dīn = p.51–55
 - vii Rāwandī's teachers in Hamadan = p.55–56
- < Insertion: *du°ā* on behalf of Kai Ḥusrau >

In the first section Rāwandī arranged the sequence of his educational stations in chronological order. He began at the beginning, with his primary education and learning of Arabic in Isfahan.¹²⁵ When his father died, Rāwandī lacked the means to continue his studies.¹²⁶ Moreover, between 1174 and 1175 a famine devastated Isfahan, killing many of the city's inhabitants.¹²⁷ The reference to this disaster apparently served as a point of reference allowing his dedicatee Kai Ḥusrau to associate the early life of the petitioner with a concrete historical event. The next period of Rāwandī's training comprises his apprenticeship with his maternal uncle Abū al-Faḍl Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. °Alī al-Rāwandī (second half of the twelfth century), a distinguished Ḥanafite theologian and

125. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: “az maktab-i adab u-taḥṣīl-i luḡat-i °Arab fāriḡ gašt” (39). In this phrase the use of the term *adab* seems to be motivated by the internal rhyme with °Arab.

126. These two circumstances are presented in two parallel dependent clauses introduced by *čūn* so that it is impossible to infer when exactly they happened and whether they happened back-to-back within a short time span: Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: 38 line 22–39 line 5.

127. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: “u-qaḥṭī ke az badāyat-i sane-yi sab°in[wa-ḥamsimi°a] tā ḡāyat-i waqt dar Iṣfahān u-nawāḥī-yi ān būde būd damār az rūzgār-i ṣiḡār u-kibār bar āwarde būd” *The famine that from the beginning of the hiḡra year 570 [i.e., began on 2 August 1174 CE] until its end had ravaged Isfahan and its regions had destroyed the lives of young and old.* (39). For the guess that Rāwandī “was probably born about A.D. 1165,” see: A.H. Morton in Swietochowski, *Illustrated Poetry*: 52.

calligrapher.¹²⁸ At an undetermined time, Abū al-Faḍl enjoyed the patronage of the atabeg Ġamāl al-Dīn Ai Abih, who belonged to the court in the Great Seljuq capital Hamadan.¹²⁹ Rāwandī's eulogies indicate that his uncle was dead at the time of the autobiography's composition, whereas Rāwandī believed Ġamāl al-Dīn Ai Abih still to be alive.¹³⁰ Rāwandī foregrounded Abū al-Faḍl's connection with the Seljuq court to implicitly argue that he himself was familiar with such an environment because his uncle and teacher had ties to one. The first subsection ends with an invocation on behalf of Abū al-Faḍl.

Rāwandī worked for ten years with his uncle Abū al-Faḍl, traveling to the important cities of western Iran.¹³¹ But Rāwandī's overall attitude toward dates for his education suggests that the time span of ten years ought not be taken literally. The statement further suggests that his uncle was more often than not searching for patronage as scholar and craftsman.¹³² During these years Rāwandī pursued the double trajectory of

128. For the interpretation that Rāwandī began working with Abū al-Faḍl when the famine wreaked havoc on Isfahan's population, see: Hillenbrand, "Rāwandī": 460.

129. For the suggestion that this Great Seljuq atabeg is identical with the slave commander Mu'ayyad-i Buzurg Ai Abih (died c. 1174), who had belonged to the Turkish entourage of the Great Seljuq sultan Sanġar (1118–1157) and later controlled Nishapur, see: Schefer, "Tableau du règne": 4 note 1; compare: Defrémery, "Sur trois princes": 446–473. For Mu'ayyad-i Buzurg's political role in Khorasan, see: Rāwandī, *Rāhat*: 179–183 and 387 note 1. For the suggestion that this atabeg was the completely unrelated Ġamāl al-Dīn Ulūġ, see: Meisami, *Persian Historiography*: 238, 266–267, and 314. Unfortunately, neither scholar explained the reasons for their identification.

130. Rāwandī, *Rāhat*: "Abū al-Faḍl Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. °Alī al-Rāwandī dāma ẓillu-hū wa-matta°a Allāh al-muslimīn bi-ṭūl baqā°i-hī" (39) and "Ġamāl al-Dīn Ai Abih al-°aẓam atābikī °azza naṣru-hū" (40). This argument is problematic because it is impossible to decide whether in the unique *Rāhat* manuscript any eulogies are later additions by the scribe.

131. Rāwandī, *Rāhat*: "muddat-i dah sāl dar ḥidmat-i ū būdam u-°uyūn-i šahr-hā-yi Irāq bipaimūdam" (40). For the observation that in texts from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the place name "Irāq" usually referred to western Iran, see: Nīšāpūrī, *History of the Seljuq Turks*: 167 note 24.

132. For the interpretation that Rāwandī spent ten years in Hamadan studying Ḥanafite law, see: Hillenbrand, "Rāwandī": 460.

calligraphy and bookbinding on the one hand and religious studies on the other. The extent of his actual theological training remained fuzzy, since he highlighted his skills as calligrapher, gilder, and bookbinder.¹³³

In the second subsection Rāwandī focused on his work experience in Hamadan during the reign of Ṭuḡril III b. Arslān. Rāwandī emphasized his personal knowledge of the court of Ṭuḡril III, his close contacts with the capital's leading families, and the outstanding reputation of his other maternal uncle, Zain al-Dīn Maḥmūd b. Muḥammad b. °Alī al-Rāwandī (born c.1144), as scholar and craftsman.¹³⁴ Although both uncles seemed to have combined a high degree of religious learning with remarkable calligraphic skills, the towering stature of Zain al-Dīn completely eclipsed Abū al-Faḍl. Rāwandī did not even mention what happened to Abū al-Faḍl after Rāwandī left him to work in Zain al-Dīn's workshop. Today the independent evidence for Zain al-Dīn's achievements consists of the Persian translation of an Arabic biography of the Prophet, ascribed to Abū Sa'd °Abd al-Malik al-Wā'iz (died c.1015), a Shafi'ite mystic from Nishapur.¹³⁵

133. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: “haftād gūne ḥaṭṭ-rā dabṭ kardam u-az naṣḥ-i maṣḥaf u-taḍḥīb u-ḡild ke bi-ḡāyat āmūḥte būdam kasī mī kardam u-bidān kutub-i °ilmī bi-dast āwardam u-bar maṣāyih-i kibār u-°ulamā-yi rūzgār u-asāṭide-yi buzgwār <sic> biḥ°āndam u-iḡāzat-i riwāyat azīṣān bisitadam” *I mastered 70 kinds of script, gained a reputation for Koranic naṣḥ, illumination, and binding, which I had learned extremely well, and thus I acquired theological books, studied with renowned sheikhs, famous theologians, and important teachers, and obtained from them the license of transmission* (40–41).

In the unique manuscript of the *Mu'nis al-aḥrār*, Rāwandī is associated with “aš°ār al-muṣauwar” and addressed as “ustād Muḥammad al-Rāwandī;” see the page's reproduction as well as the consideration of Rāwandī as calligrapher and illustrator by A.H. Morton in Swietochowski, *Illustrated Poetry*: 26 and 54–55.

134. The *hiḡra* year 539 [i.e., began 4 July 1144 CE] as the year of Zain al-Dīn's birth is inferred from the information that he attracted attention in the *hiḡra* year 557 [i.e., began on 21 December 1161 CE] when at the age of eighteen he recited a *qāṣīda* in Kashan (Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: 51 lines 18–23). The *nisba* Kāṣī has been added to the uncle's name in Meisami, *Persian Historiography*: 238.

135. The Bibliothèque nationale owns a manuscript of the Persian *Kitāb šaraf al-nabī* (Book about the Prophet's Glory), dated 1281 (Richard, *Splendeurs persans*: 40 s.v. 6). In the introduction Naḡm al-Dīn Maḥmūd b. °Alī al-Rawandī is identified as the translator of the Arabic *Šaraf al-Muṣṭafā* (Muṣṭafā's Glory)

Rāwandī labored to illustrate for his dedicatee Kai Ḥusrau how closely he himself was associated with the Great Seljuq court in Hamadan. He combined the eulogies for Ṭuḡril III with praise for the splendors of his court in Hamadan, even though Hamadan was only second to the incomparable Isfahan.¹³⁶ In addition, he relied on the well-established rhetorical device of an announced omission to highlight his personal knowledge of Ṭuḡril’s life and deeds:

If the events of this dynasty and the miracles of this kingdom are written down, more than ten *Šāhnāmes* and *Iskandarnāmes* will be about falconry and hunting, battle and banquet, as well as the conquest of countries, the disgrace of enemies, and the bonds of friendship. If this petitioner lives through the good fortune and the monarch [i.e., Kai Ḥusrau]’s favor, he will write about the events of Ṭuḡril’s state und construct from this a book in verse or prose. But in this compilation I am obliged to do several things so that its intention were lost, if the beginning delves into those circumstances.¹³⁷

In 1181, the teenage boy Ṭuḡril III had began to study with Rāwandī’s uncle Zain al-Dīn, so that the young sultan was both patron and student of Zain al-Dīn.¹³⁸ The sultan was

by Abū Sa’d ‘Abd al-Malik al-Wāfi’ al-Ḥargūshī. For the author of the Arabic original, see: GAS 1: 670 s.v. 52; for its Persian translation, see: Storey 1,1: 175–176 and 175 note 2. The number of both Arabic and Persian manuscripts listed by Sezgin and Storey suggests that this version of the Prophet’s biography was fairly popular in either language. This translation was already known to Iqbāl: Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: XVII note 1.

136. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: 41 lines 6–43 line1.

137. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: “u-ta’rīḥ-i ān daulat u-‘aḡā’ib-hā-yi ān mamlakat agar niwište šawad dah *Šāhnāme* u-*Iskandarnāme* bīš buwad az bāz u-šikār u-razm u-bazm u-fath-i bilād u-šikast-i ḥuṣmān u-šilat-i dūstān u-agar īn du‘aḡūy dar daulat u-ni‘mat-i pādīšāh ‘umr yābad ta’rīḥ-i daulat-i ṭuḡrilī binawīsad u-az ān kitābī sāzad naṭman au naṭran ammā darīn maḡmū‘e multazim-i čand čiz šude’am ke agar darīn waqāyi‘ ... šurū‘ rawad maqṣūd-i īn maḡmū‘ mafqūd šawad” (44).

138. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: “[sulṭān-i sa‘īd-i šahīd] ū-rā [i.e., imām-i kabīr-i muqbal zain al-dīn maḡd al-Islām saiyid al-ayimma wa-l-‘ulamā’ ustād al-mulūk wa-salāṭīn Maḥmūd b. Muḥammad b. ‘Alī al-Rāwandī] tašrīf-i ustādi arzānī dāšt u-ḥ”āst ke az anwār-i ‘ulūm-i ū istifādātī kunad” [*the late fortunate sultan*] bestowed upon him [i.e., the great and fortunate leading theologian, the faith’s beauty and Islam’s glory, the master of the leading theologians and learned men, the teacher of princes and sultans, Maḥmūd b. Muḥammad b. ‘Alī al-Rāwandī] the honor of teaching and wished to take advantage of the bright lights of his knowledge and learning (43).

When Ṭuḡril III advanced to the throne in 1176, he was still a child: Bosworth, “Salḍjūkids”: 944–945. That Ṭuḡril III was born between 1168 and 1169 is mentioned by A.H. Morton in Swietochowski,

particularly interested in calligraphy, and embarked on the manufacture of a luxury Koran in thirty parts, which was executed in a workshop characterized by an extensive division of labor.¹³⁹ Rāwandī joined this workshop, and subsequently the sultan acknowledged the high quality of his calligraphy.¹⁴⁰ It is impossible to decide, though, whether Rāwandī worked directly for the sultan. In connection with the later survey of contents of the *Rāḥat*, Rāwandī mentioned that Ṭuḡril III died too early as for him to benefit from the sultan's generosity.¹⁴¹ But the extent to which Ṭuḡril III was ultimately in charge of the Koran project is not specified. For example, did the sultan himself hire and fire the craftsmen for this project? His actual artistic contribution to this project also remains unclear,¹⁴² though Rāwandī did include information about the whereabouts of the Koran manuscript, which was dispersed at the time of the composition of the *Rāḥat*. In particular, he identified Saif al-Dīn Begtimur (ruled 1185–1193), the Sökmenid slave

Illustrated Poetry: 52. Morton, unfortunately, does not identify the sources from which he culled this date.

139. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: “muṣḥafī sī pāre mabda’ kard u-mī niwišt u-naqqāšān u-maddāhibāb-rā biyaward tā harē ū mī niwišt iṣānaš bi-zar-i ḥall takhīl mī kardand bar har guz’ī sī pāre šad dīnār-i maḡribī ḥarḡ mī šud.” *He [i.e., Ṭuḡril III] began with a Koran in thirty parts. He was writing and brought in illuminators and gilders so that his men were outlining with liquid gilt whatever he was writing. Upon every part of the thirty volumes a hundred gold coins were being spent.* (44).

140. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: “u-īn du‘āgūy bidān sabab az ān ḥaḍrat taqrīb u-taḥrīb yāft u-taḥkīl-i niwište-yi ū bīštar ma-rā farmūdī ke bi-sabab-i ma‘rifat-i ḥatt ānč du‘āgūy kardī bihtar numūdī” *This petitioner therefore found proximity and welcome from that excellency [i.e., Ṭuḡril]. He was asking me more often to outline his script because that which the petitioner was writing was appearing to be of better quality due to his calligraphy skills.* (44).

141. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: “u-du‘āgūy-i daulat ... az daulat-i sulṭan Ṭuḡril bi-sabab-i qaṣr-i ‘umr-ū maḥrūm būd u-az ni‘mat-i ū nayāsūd” *the petitioner to the state ... was deprived of sultan Ṭuḡril’s good fortune for the reason of the brevity of his life and did not find his peace of mind through the sultan’s favor* (66).

142. For the suggestion that the outline (*takhīl*) was secondary, see A.H. Morton in Swietochowski, *Illustrated Poetry*: “His [i.e., Rāwandī’s] speciality was the outlining of the sultan’s written text in gold;” (52). For basic observations about employing liquid gold in calligraphy, see: Déroche, *Manuel*: 159 and 161.

commander of the city Akhlat in eastern Anatolia, and ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Körp Arslān (ruled c.1188–1208), the Ahmadili atabeg of the city Maragha in Azerbaijan, as owners of some of the manuscript’s thirty volumes.¹⁴³ These data provided Rāwandī’s dedicatee Kai Husrau with details that allowed for double-checking his professional credentials, while attesting to the importance attached to such a luxury edition of the Koran among the ruling Turkish elites.¹⁴⁴

Rāwandī’s other employment in Hamadan acquainted him with one of the capital’s long established clans. For five or six years Rāwandī lived with the family of Faḥr al-Dīn b. ‘Alā’ al-Daula ‘Arab Šāh (died c.1188)¹⁴⁵ and instructed his sons Mağd al-Dīn Humāyūn, Faḥr al-Dīn Husrau Šāh and ‘Imād al-Dīn Mardān Šāh in Koran, calligraphy, the principles of worship, and the rules of political leadership.¹⁴⁶ Although this teaching position provided Rāwandī with access to Hamadan’s political elites, he neither specified the years he spent with ‘Arab Šāh’s family nor declared explicitly that the unjust slaying of ‘Arab Šāh ended his employment.¹⁴⁷ ‘Arab Šāh was the head of the

143. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: 44 lines 5-7. For these two local Turkish dynasties, see: Bosworth, *New Islamic Dynasties*: 197–198.

144. Toward the end of the institutional history of the Great Seljuqs, the king of Mazandaran received a Koran written by Tuğril III as a present: Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: 357 lines 7-10. There is, however, no reason to assume that this Koran was the luxury edition, in the manufacture of which Rāwandī and his uncle Zain al-Dīn were involved.

145. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: XVIII. Within the context of his institutional history of the Great Seljuq sultanate, Rāwandī did not specify the year of ‘Arab Šāh’s death but he reported how Tuğril III arranged his execution and even inserted a Persian elegy for his former employer: 352 line 10–355 line 14.

146. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: 45–46. For the influential position of ‘Arab Šāh among Hamadan’s ruling’s elites, compare Rāwandī’s further references to him (537 s.v. ‘Arab Šāh).

147. For the speculation that Rāwandī was forced to search for new patrons after the Ildegizid atabeg Qizil Arslān took Tuğril III prisoner in 1190, compare: Hillenbrand, “Rāwandī”: 460. For this event, see: Nīšāpūrī, *History of the Seljuq Turks*: 160.

°Alawī family who claimed kinship with the Prophet.¹⁴⁸ Despite the *Rāḥat*'s Ḥanafite bend and its pronounced anti-Rāfiḍite sentiment Rāwandī explicitly mentioned the *nisba* °Alawī and did not dwell on the family's Shi'ite sympathies.¹⁴⁹ Aside from the obligatory panegyrics for father and sons, Rāwandī quoted four lines of *fahlawīya*, a not yet identified Iranian language, attributed to Ḥusrau Šāh.¹⁵⁰ Rāwandī alleged that Ḥusrau Šāh, who was a renowned political leader at the time of the *Rāḥat*'s composition,¹⁵¹ wrote these lines when intrigues had reversed his good fortune and caused his imprisonment.

148. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: “dar dār al-malik Hamadān ḥāndān-i °Alawīyān u-dūdman-i sādāt ke tā qiyāmat bimānād sar u-sarwar amīr saiyyid Murtaḍā kabīrun Faḥr al-Dīn-i °Alā’ al-Daula °Arabšāh raḥima-hū Allāh” *In the capital Hamadan the ruling family belonged to the °Alawīs and their lineage was the direct kinship with the Prophet—may it persevere until the resurrection. Their commander in chief was the prince and Saiyyid, a great Murtaḍā, Faḥr al-Dīn b. °Alā’ al-Daula °Arab Šāh—may God have mercy upon him* (45). The reading of °Arab Šāh’s name follows the composition of the names of his three sons. In the name index, of the critical edition, this is the only occurrence of the plural “°Alawīyān”: 531. For the claim that in Hamadan an °Alawī and an °Alā’ al-Daula family succeeded each other as the predominant family, first the °Alawīs (864–1058) and then the family of °Alā’ al-Daula (1058–1252), compare: Aḍkā’ī, “Hamadān”: 610–611. Aḍkā’ī did not discuss the available sources for Hamadan and referred only to his own publications, not to any contemporary Arabic and Persian sources. Neither local histories nor biographical dictionaries for Hamadan are known to have been preserved: Frye, “Hamadhān”: 105. But the lineage of °Arab Šāh is not perceived as problematic by Schefer, “Tableau du règne”: 7; or A.H. Morton in Swietochowski, *Illustrated Poetry*: 53.

149. An anti-Rāfiḍite treatise, of which no extant copy is known, is mentioned in connection with the Khwarazm Shahs and their conquest of western Iran: Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: 394 lines 20–24. For the observation that “genuine °Alawīs did not commonly use the name °Alawī,” see: Kadi, “°Alawī”: 804.

150. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: 46 lines 4–7; their rhyme scheme is aa ba cc dc suggesting that these *fahlawīya* could be two separate *dūbait*. For two more lines of *fahlawīya*, compare: 45 line 16 with the internal rhyme is aa, and 460 line 9 with internal rhyme ab. Thus, Rāwandī included a total of six lines of *fahlawīya*; compare Iqbāl’s survey of cited poetry: XXII. Unfortunately, their language has not yet been identified: Browne, “Account”: 576; and Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: XIII. For the suggestion that these lines were composed in a Kurdish dialect, see: Schefer, “Tableau du règne”: 7–8 and 13. Consequently, Schefer’s transcription of these four lines is different from Iqbāl’s text. It is noteworthy that the Persian vernacular of the popular quatrains attributed to the mystic and saint Bābā Ṭāhīr °Uryān (between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries) was in contemporary sources identified as *fahlawīya*: Safi, “Bargaining”: 268; for the observation that some of those quatrains have pronounced traces of a Persian dialect from western Iran, compare: de Bruijn, *Persian Sufi Poetry*: 14 and 27 note 12.

151. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: “u-amīr saiyyid Faḥr al-Dīn Ḥusraušāh ke darīn ḥālat ra’īs u-pīšwā-st u-ḡawānmard-i muṭlaq ū-rā tawān ḥ’āndan če ham ā’in-i riyāsāt dārad u-ham rasm-i siyāsāt dānad” *the prince Saiyyid Faḥr al-Dīn Ḥusrau Šāh, who now is the leader and the guide and whom one can call a perfect hero because he has the manners of leadership and also knows the laws of administration* (45).

The poetic insertion allowed Rāwandī to signal to his dedicatee Kai Ḥusrau that he was experienced in tutoring men who needed to be prepared for rule and power as well as hardship and sacrifice.

The final period of Rāwandī's education and work experiences consists of the two years that he stayed with the theologian and calligrapher Aḥmad b. Abī Maṣṣūr b. Muḥammad b. Maṣṣūr al-Bazzāz al-Qāsānī (second half of the twelfth century).¹⁵² Rāwandī did not explicate the reasons for leaving the family of °Arab Šāh, nor did he reveal whether he was still living in Hamadan during these two years.¹⁵³ He praised Aḥmad al-Bazzāz not only as a great scholar and mentor but also as his close and dear friend.¹⁵⁴ The actual extent of Aḥmad al-Bazzāz's fame is nonetheless dubious because Rāwandī justified the mention of his friend to his dedicatee Kai Ḥusrau by explaining that, while staying with Aḥmad al-Bazzāz, he found the peace of mind to conceive the plan of writing the *Rāḥat*.¹⁵⁵ That the concluding invocation on behalf of Aḥmad al-

152. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: 48–49. The *nisba* Qāsānī links this man to the city Qāsān and its district in the northern part of the province Farghana: Le Strange, *Lands of the Eastern Caliphate*: 433 and 480, as well as map IX.

153. For the interpretation that Rāwandī's employment consisted of the socially low position of teaching a cloth merchant's son in Hamadan, see: A.H. Morton in Swietochowski, *Illustrated Poetry*: 52–53. The base of this interpretation is probably the *laqab* al-Bazzāz, since, as already mentioned, neither local histories nor biographical dictionaries for Hamadan are known to have been preserved.

154. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: “bā man ḥūrdī u-ḥuffī u-ḥiç rāz az man nanihuffī” *with me you ate and you slept, and you did not hide any secret from me*; and “u-ḥunānk man haqq-i ustādī-yi way furū nagudāštam ū nīz ḥaqq-i šāgirdī-yi man nigāh dāšt” *As I did not neglect his claim to mastership he also supported my claim to apprenticeship* (49).

155. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: “Har rūz futūḥī u-āsāyiš-i rūḥī az ān mī gušūd ... dar ān waqt [i.e., muddat-i dū sāl] īn taṣnīf dar ḥāṭir būd az way qubūl kardam ke nām-i šarīf-i ū dar kitāb-i rāḥat al-sudūr wa-āyat al-surūr āram” *Every day a spiritual repose and relief unfolded due to him. ... At this time [i.e., the period of two years] this composition was on the mind. Because of this I decided that I would bring his noble name into the Comfort of Hearts and the Wonder of Delights* (49). For the interpretation that in 1202 Aḥmad al-Bazzāz “encouraged him to begin writing the *Rāḥat*,” see: Hillenbrand, “Rāwandī”: 460. Hillenbrand's

Bazzāz is remarkably short by Rāwandī's standards increases these doubts.

In the third subsection, Rāwandī combined the praise of his uncle Zain al-Dīn with the claim that the scholars of Hamadan were famous as the mentors of the Seljuq sultans.¹⁵⁶ Both statements are necessary for the syllogism with which Rāwandī bolstered his plea for Kai Ḥusrau's patronage: The learned men of Hamadan taught the Seljuq sultans, and Rāwandī was trained by these men, and therefore Rāwandī could be a valuable instructor of Kai Ḥusrau.

Rāwandī prepared the praise of Zain al-Dīn by repeating that both uncles had taught men of power and influence in western Iran and Khorasan.¹⁵⁷ Still, Zain al-Dīn received much more coverage and seemed to have been the far more renowned scholar, so Rāwandī's choice of Zain al-Dīn as his role model appears as the logical conclusion.¹⁵⁸ Rāwandī conveyed Zain al-Dīn's achievements in three steps. The first consists of the general remark that all visitors to Ṭuḡril's sophisticated court praised his uncle's outstanding learning.¹⁵⁹ The second provides the short report that already in 1162 the

interpretation assumes that Rāwandī's later statement about thinking about writing a book in 1202 (Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: 62 lines 8-12) refers back to this earlier statement.

156. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: 51–56.

157. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: “u-hamčunīn bištar maʿārif u-pādišāhān u-arkān-i daulat-i pisarān-rā ism-i šāgirdī duʿāgūy u-ḥālān-i way ḥāšil kardandī u-kāsānī ke bi-balāḡat-i maʿrūf būdandī dar ḡumle-yi ḥitte-yi ʿIrāq u-ṣaub-i Ḥūrāsān bi-ḥatt u-hunar-i tafāruḥ bi-šāgirdī-yi mā kardandī” *The petitioner and his maternal uncles were thus supplying the title of apprenticeship to many acquaintances, monarchs, and the sons of the pillars of the state. People who were known for eloquence boasted about their apprenticeship for calligraphy and craftsmanship with us in the whole territory of western Iran and everywhere in Khorasan* (51).

158. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: “duʿāgūy-i daulat ... ḥʾāst ke pay-i rūy-i Zain al-Dīn kunad” *The petitioner to the state ... hopes to follow the example of Zain al-Dīn* (54–55).

159. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: 51.

adolescent Zain al-Dīn impressed scholars in Kashan when he recited an Arabic *qaṣīda*. In this context, Rāwandī specified the year, but did not identify the audience or quote the poem.¹⁶⁰ For the third step, Rāwandī specified the year 1181, named the honorable °Azīz al-Dīn, a tax collector, as addressee and the honorable Zāhīr al-Dīn Karağī as a man in the audience, and quoted the complete Arabic *zuḥdīya*.¹⁶¹ On this occasion, Rāwandī's uncle proved that both courage and learning won him the favor of °Azīz al-Dīn and praise from Zāhīr al-Dīn Karağī.¹⁶² Rāwandī identified the year, named addressee and audience, and cited the complete text of the poem to verify the event, yet he did not see any necessity to explain to his dedicatee Kai Ḥusrau how he learned about this incident or whether he actually witnessed Zain al-Dīn's performance. Instead Rāwandī cut from the past to the present and continued with a direct appeal to his dedicatee Kai Ḥusrau.

This appeal concludes the first section of Rāwandī's autobiographical statement.

Rāwandī used an expression of humility to link the praise of Zain al-Dīn with the observation about the role of Hamadan's scholars in the education of the Seljuq sultans.¹⁶³ Although Rāwandī's declaration that he wants to follow the example set by his uncle Zain

160. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: “dar sane-yi sab° wa-ḥamsīn wa-ḥamsimī'a dar Kāshān ... bar bisāt-i mu'ayyin-i sāwī-yi mustaufī-yi sulṭān qaṣīde-yi bar ḥ°ānd tāzī” in the ḥiğra year 557 [i.e., 1162 CE] in Kashan ... he recited over a carpet reserved for the tributes of the sultan's accountant a *qaṣīda* in Arabic (51).

161. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: 52 line 14–54 line 20. For the technical description of the *qaṣīda*'s rhyme as *luzūm mā lā yalzam* and its ascetic contents, see: 52 lines 15-16. The *qaṣīda* comprises 33 distichs with the *qāfiya* -ābi-hī.

162. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: 54 lines 13-20.

163. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: “mašāyih u-ustādān-i du°āgūy dar Hamadān ... u-dīgar a'imma'e-yi kibār dar mamālik-i 'Irāqain u-ṭaraf-i Ḥūrāsān az tarbiyat-i salāṭīn-i āl-i Salḡūq u-bandegānīshān maḍkūr u-manzūr-i ḡahānīyān šudand” the sheikhs and teachers of the petitioner in Hamadan ... and other leading theologians in the kingdoms of Iraq and Iran and the region of Khorasan became men famous and respected throughout the world because of the education of the sultans of the Seljuq family and their servants (55).

al-Dīn but that his knowledge is far from complete,¹⁶⁴ appears as a cliché, since it served as much as an expression of respect for his maternal uncle as a courtier's bow before a prospective patron. Rāwandī's admission that he had not yet reached his full potential also has a strategic implication since Kai Ḥusrau would extend his protection to a fledgling scholar in need, that is, to someone who is weaker than a master at the height of his knowledge. Rāwandī first juxtaposed the difficult working conditions in western Iran with those in Anatolia, which was flourishing because of the just and protective rule of his dedicatee Kai Ḥusrau. He then broadened the argument:

He [i.e., Rāwandī] will find nourishment on the right side of his [i.e., Kai Ḥusrau's] good fortune in the protective shadow of his state. In the territory of the Byzantines he [i.e., Rāwandī] will propagate the virtues that the people of Khorasan and western Iran have learned from him and, with the good fortune of the just monarch, the revival of knowledge will occur in this land and thus will cause the scholarly works of the people of Byzantium ... to reach the whole world.¹⁶⁵

In this passage Rāwandī relied on induction to compare his personal benefits from Kai Ḥusrau's patronage with the general consequences that Kai Ḥusrau's patronage of scholars could have for Anatolia. The work of officially sponsored scholars would improve the state of Islamic learning in Anatolia, and then literary works originating in Anatolia would spread knowledge across the *umma*. Rāwandī's appeal to a civilizing, and perhaps even missionary, spirit cannot be dismissed as a purely rhetorical sleight of

164. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: "guzwī az kullī dar yafte ast" *He [i.e., Rāwandī] has understood an insignificant part of the totality* (55).

165. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: "u-bi-yamīn-i iqbāl-i ū [i.e., Kai Ḥusrau] dar sāye-yi daulat-aš parwarīš yābad u-ḥitte-yi Rūm našar-i faḍāyilī ke ahl-i Ḥūrāsān u-ʿIrāq az ḥʾiśān [i.e., Rāwandī] kasb kardeʾand bikunad u-bi-daulat-i pādīšāh-i ʿādil iḥyā-yi dāniš darīn diyār bibāšad u-čunān sāzad ke āṭār-i dāniš-i ahl-i Rūm ... bi-ḡumle-yi ḡahān birasad" (55).

hand because the Seljuqs had only begun to establish their rule over these former territories of the Byzantine empire after their decisive victory over the army of Romanos IV Diogenes at Mantzikert in 1071.

III. h. Work sample

The second section of the autobiographical statement immediately follows the invocation on behalf of Kai Ḥusrau, with which Rāwandī ended the first section about his training and his work experience. After having explained the benefits that Kai Ḥusrau might obtain through employing Rāwandī at his court, Rāwandī focused on the *Rāḥat*'s contents and its potential value for Kai Ḥusrau. Although Rāwandī had already shortly touched on his plan for writing the *Rāḥat*, it is in this section that he provided first a detailed discussion of the reasons for writing the miscellany and his difficulties while working on the project—"sabab-i tālīf-i īn kitāb u-kaifīyat-i ḥāl-i ān ke-čūn būd"¹⁶⁶— and then a survey of its content—"fihrist-i kitāb-i Rāḥat al-ṣudūr wa-āyat al-surūr u-tartīb-i mustauda'āt-i ān az funūn-i 'ilm."¹⁶⁷ The section's organization into three subsections ensues again from Rāwandī's use of invocations.

Table 8. The second autobiographical section of the *Rāḥat*.

Book projects and the study of poetry

i An illustrated book of poetry = p.57

ii The study of poetry = p.57–58

iii Rāwandī's book project = p.58–60

<Insertion: *du'ā'* that God may grant Rāwandī a good reputation >

166. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: 57.

167. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: 63.

Poetry, fame, and the contents of the Rāḥat

iv The rewards of both supporting poets and alms giving = p.60–62

v The gestation of the *Rāḥat* between 1202 and 1207 = p.62–63

vi The contents of the *Rāḥat* = p.63–68

< insertion: *du^c ā'* that the *Rāḥat* may be read according to Rāwandī's intentions >

Postscript to the contents of the Rāḥat

vii The justification for omitting some of the announced chapters = p.457–458

< insertion: *du^c ā'* on behalf of Kai Ḥusrau >

In the first subsection, Rāwandī juxtaposed two book projects. He described both an illustrated anthology of poetry that sultan Ṭuḡril III commissioned from his uncle Zain al-Dīn in 1184 and his own plan of writing a book containing poetry as well as prose.¹⁶⁸ There are two important differences between these projects. First, Zain al-Dīn completed his assignment, while Rāwandī dropped his plan when sultan Ṭuḡril III died in a battle against the Khwarazm Shahs in spring of 1194.¹⁶⁹ Second, Zain al-Dīn included only poetry in his anthology, while Rāwandī envisioned a miscellany containing both poetry

168. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: “u-sabab-i ta’līf-i īn kitāb ān būd ke ... Ṭuḡril b. Arslān-rā hawā-yi maḡmū^ce-ī būd az aš’ār ḥāl-i du^c āgūy Zain al-Dīn niwīšt u-Ġamāl Naqqāš Iṣfahānī ān-rā šūrat mī kard šūrat-i har šā^cirī mī kardand” *The reason for the writing of this book was that ... Ṭuḡril b. Arslān desired a certain compilation of poetry. The maternal uncle of the petitioner Zain al-Dīn wrote and Ġamāl Naqqāš Iṣfahānī illustrated it. They were making an image of every poet*, (57); and “mu’allif-i īn maḡmū^cī ... ḥ^wāst ke iḥtiyār-i čand šī^cr u-naṭr bikunad u-dar maḡmū^cī āra tā yād gīrand īn umnīyat dar ḥiḡāb-i ta^caddur mī būd če dar muddat-i miḥnat-i ‘Irāq rang-i nafs bi-ḡāyat būd u-dard-i dil bī nihāyat” *The author of this compilation ... wanted to choose some poetry and some prose and to collect them in a compilation so that they would be remembered. This wish proved impossible to realize because during the misfortune of western Iran the soul’s pain was extreme and the heart’s ache infinite*. (58). For the problems that Rāwandī’s description of the book, which sultan Ṭuḡril III commissioned, as an illustrated anthology of poetry pose for art historians and literary critics alike, see: A.H. Morton in Swietochowski, *Illustrated Poetry*: 54–55. The situation is further complicated by the absence of any supporting manuscript evidence from the late twelfth century, be it fragments of this very codex or another illustrated anthology of poetry. The already mentioned unique manuscript of the *Mu’nis al-aḥrār* postdates Rāwandī’s remark by one and a half century.

169. At least two dates are circulating for the death of the last Great Seljuq sultan: for 24 Ġumādā al-āḥira of the *hiḡra* year 590 [i.e., 16 June 1194 CE] see: Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: 371 lines 10–18; and for 29 Rabī^c al-auwal of the *hiḡra* year 590 [i.e., 25 March 1194 CE], see: Leiser, *History of the Seljuks*: 65, and Nīšāpūrī, *History of the Seljuq Turks*: 163. For the conclusion that Rāwandī’s original dedicatee was in fact sultan Ṭuḡril III, see: Meisami, *Persian Historiography*: 255–256.

and prose. Rāwandī connected his remarks about these two books with an anecdote about the renowned Ghaznavid court poet Ḥasan al-Ġaznawī (died c.1161) and his method of learning the composition of poetry through memorizing excerpts from every genre and imitating their style.¹⁷⁰ Rāwandī ended the first subsection on a somber tone. After the death of sultan Ṭuġril III, the Khwarazm Shahs established their rule over western Iran, and Rāwandī withdrew into a life of anonymity and independence dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge.¹⁷¹ Seen against the background of his low-profile career in Hamadan during the rule of the last Great Seljuq, the actual extent of the change of Rāwandī's fortune should be viewed with skepticism. The image of his retirement to a godforsaken corner during times of adversity and conflict appears as a topos that reflects the unstable

170. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: “amīr al-šu‘arā u-safir al-kubarā Šams al-Dīn Aḥmad b. Minūcihr Šašt Kallih ... ḥikāyat kard ke Saiyid Ašraf bi-Hamadān rasīd dar maktab-hā mī gardīd u-nī dīd tā kirā ṭab‘-i šīr-ast mišrā‘ī bi-man dād tā bar ān wazn dū siḥ bait guftam bi-sam‘-i riḍā iṣḡā farmūd u-ma-rā bidān bisutūd u-ḥatt u-taḥrīd-i wāġib dāšt u-guft az aš‘ār-i muta‘aḥḥirān ... u-amṭāl-i ‘Arab u-aš‘ār-i tāzī u-ḥikam-i Šāhnāme ānč ṭab‘-i tū bidān mail kunad qadr-i diwīst bait az har ġā iḥtiyār kun u-yād ġīr” *the chief of the poets and head of the elders Šams al-Dīn Aḥmad b. Manūcihr Šašt Kallih ... told the story: Saiyid Ašraf came to Hamadan to roam the libraries and to see who had a natural talent for poetry. He gave me a certain hemistich so that I recited two or three distichs in that meter. He listened with approval, praised me for it, and had the necessary incitement and prompting. He said: Among the poems of the contemporaries ..., the proverbs of the Arabs, the Arabic poems, and the wise sayings of the Šāhnāme is that toward which your natural talent is inclined. Choose two-hundred distichs from each and memorize them!* (57–58). For Ḥasan al-Ġaznawī, who was also known as Saiyid Ašraf, see: Meisami, “Ḥasan-e Ġaznavi.” For the problems posed by this anecdote with regard to the chronology of Persian poetry, see: Browne, “Account”: 580–581.

171. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: “man nīz sar dar kuṅġ-i ‘uzlat kišīdam u-zāwiye-yi farāġat bar guzīdam dast az kasb u-manāl bidāštam u-ġāḥ u-māl biguzāštam ... ‘ilm-i fiḥḥ u-šarī‘at mīḥ‘āndam u-dīkr-i ḥaqq u-Qur‘ān bar zabān mī rāndam u-bi-muṭāla‘e-yi luġat u-šīr-hā-yi ‘Arab u-‘Aġam mu‘ānasat mī ġustam” *I too retreated into retirement and chose the corner of freedom. I kept my hands off gains and profits and gave up position and wealth. ... I used to study the sciences of jurisprudence and law, to recite the praise of God and the Koran, and to search for in-depth knowledge through reading about language and the poems of Arabs and non-Arabs.* (59). Compare the almost identical description of his retreat from the public at the beginning of the third section of the autobiographical statement: 459 lines 15-17.

working conditions of courtiers.¹⁷² Further support for this interpretation is that Rāwandī illustrated his abject situation with the terse statement that he was poor and had neither relatives nor children,¹⁷³ although he had mentioned his *kunya* Abū Bakr at the very beginning of the autobiographical statement.¹⁷⁴ The strategic value of this topos lies in setting the stage for the following arguments about the eternity of an impeccable reputation in both this transitory world and the eternal hereafter. Accordingly, Rāwandī concluded this subsection with an invocation that God might recognize his goodness.¹⁷⁵

In the second subsection Rāwandī developed an reciprocal argument about how he as well as his dedicatee Kai Ḥusrau would benefit from the *Rāḥat*. The miscellany will survive its author and thus become a memento of both its author and the Great Seljuq sultans, while the institutional history of the Great Seljuq sultans will inspire the Rum Seljuq sultan Kai Ḥusrau to emulate his relatives in order to attain for himself immortality through fame. The strategy is openly addressed in the invocation, which provides the transition between the autobiographical statement and the institutional history: Rāwandī asked God to grant him the fulfilment of the wish that his readers realize the intentions

172. Compare, for example., Baihaqī, *Ta'riḥ*: “az īn qaum ke man suḥan ḥ”āham rānd yik dū tan zande’ and dar gūše-yi uftāde” *of these folks, whom I will mention, one or two are alive and have retreated into a corner* (221); but see also the translation in Waldman, *Toward a Theory*: “of these people about whom I will speak, one or two persons are living in forced retirement” (167).

173. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: “ne māli ne manālī ne ahlī ne ‘iyālī” (59).

174. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: 39 line 1; compare 1 line 3 (title page).

175. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: “pādišāhā nām-i man bi-nīkī dar zabān-i bandegān āḥir-i zamān afkan” *Oh Divine Monarch, at Judgment Day, may You make my name a byword for goodness on the tongues of your servants!* (60).

informing the *Rāḥat*.¹⁷⁶

Rāwandī's first step consisted of establishing a connection between the permanence of books, poems and knowledge on the one hand, and *waqfs*, poetry and memory on the other.¹⁷⁷ Books as well as poems survive both their authors and their subjects.¹⁷⁸ Voluntary alms (*ṣadaqa*) used for *waqfs*, which support schools and other educational institutions, contribute to the donor's happy afterlife and gain him the reputation of being a supporter of learning and knowledge. The strategic device of Rāwandī's argument is the implicit equating of voluntary alms paid into *waqfs* and money paid for the composition of poetry about the payer's exploits and feats because a panegyric poem commemorates its honoree (*mamdūh*) in the same way a *waqf*

176. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: “u-ğaraḍ azīn mağmū'e dīkr-i ... ast” *The purpose of this compilation is the mention of...* (64); and “u-ğaraḍ-i īn du'āgūy ba'da al-ḥatt 'alā al-ḥair ān-ast ke ḥ'ānandegān ... bidānand ... malik-i ta'alā īn umnīyat karāmat kunād bi-Muḥammad wa-āli-hī” *It is the petitioner's intention, after urging the good deed, that the readers may know ... May the sublime King grant this wish – by Muḥammad and his family!* (67–68).

177. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: “u-illā az taṣnīf-i kutub u-šī'r-hā-yi ābdār īn dīkr pāydār namānad u-yādgār az mardum illā fāydatī 'ilmī binimānad ... ṣadaqa sabab-i ṭawāb-i āḥirat buwad ... u-auqāf-i madāris u-ḥānqāh-hā-rā ham nām-i dars hast u-ham ṭawāb-i āḥirat” *Only because of the compilation of lustrous books and poems this mention remains permanent, and remembrance among people remains only profitable as knowledge. ... Voluntary alms are the reason for reward in the afterlife. ... The endowments of schools and convents possess both the reputation for study and the reward in the afterlife* (60); and “hamčunān [pādišāhān] māl badal kunand tā šu'arā qaṣā'id dar ḥaqq-i iṣṣān iṣnād kunand dīgarān yād gīrānd ... makārim-i aḥlāq-i pidarān zande mānad u-ğahāniyān bi-kamāl-i rasand” *In the same manner [monarchs] offer wealth until poets recite poems on their behalf so that others would memorize them. ... The generous actions of the character of the fathers remain alive, and mortals reach the perfection of knowledge.* (61).

178. Rāwandī's high opinion of the importance of written records for the transmission of knowledge might represent in part the bias of a professional calligrapher whose livelihood depended on a demand for books; compare the excursus about the role of reading and writing for both the preservation of personal testimony and the acquisition of other people's experience: Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: 445 line 15–446 line 19. On the one hand, it seems quite ironic that there is no extant evidence for the other two books, which Rāwandī claimed to have written: 394 lines 20–24 (anti-Rāfiḍite treatise) and 445 line 15 (treatise on calligraphy). On the other, it is logical that Rāwandī did not refer to the traditional motif of sons who preserve their father's memory. This reference would have weakened Rāwandī's argument that his professional services as calligrapher and scholar would help his dedicatee achieve long-lasting fame.

commemorates its donor (*wāqif*). Furthermore, panegyric poetry, as well as *waqfs*, has the potential to outlast the lives of their *mamdūhs* and *wāqifs*. Both can spread fame to the future generations because in the endowed institutions students memorize panegyric poetry. With this argument Rāwandī gave Kai Ḥusrau an opportunity to combine a Muslim's pious duty of alms giving with a ruler's obligation of producing a historical record of his administration.

In the second step, Rāwandī outlined his process of decision making, beginning with picking a book project and determining its contents and concluding with selecting its dedicatee. Seen against his rather casual approach to dates in the previous autobiographical section, he rather precisely informed his dedicatee about the time frame of the five years between 1202 and 1207 during which the development of his *Rāḥat* project took shape. This change in attitude suggests that dates and tracking time were relevant with regard to concrete requests for patronage, supporting the interpretation that the historical person Rāwandī did not rely exclusively on his appeal for Kai Ḥusrau's support as the pretense for writing a miscellany. Sometime between 1202 and 1203 Rāwandī decided to write a book to preserve the memory of his own existence.¹⁷⁹ Around eight years after the death of Great Seljuq sultan Tuğril III in 1194, Nūr al-Dīn Kukge (died 1203) governed on behalf of the Khwarazm Shahs the former Seljuq capital

179. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: 62 lines 8-12; the *hiğra* year 599 began on 20 September 1202 CE. Rāwandī's reference to the *hiğra* year 599 is interesting with regard to the already mentioned thesis that Rāwandī originally dedicated the *Rāḥat* to Kai Ḥusrau's brother Sulaimān II; see above, chapter II, notes 221 and 224. However, the evidence for this thesis is uneven: the mention of Abkhazian dogs (Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: 26 line 2) is taken as a reference to Sulaimān's unsuccessful attack on Georgia; the scribbled name of Sulaimān appears in the unique manuscript on the margin of the chapter about numerical divination (XX); and Rāwandī's own account of how he picked the miscellany's dedicatee (461 lines 1-10).

Hamadan, while in Anatolia the Rum Seljuq sultan Sulaimān II b. Qiliğ Arslān (ruled 1197–1204) was reigning in Konya. Since the *Rāḥat*’s historical part concludes with Kukğē’s tenure as governor of Hamadan without extending to his murder, Rāwandī seems to have aligned the beginning of his work on the miscellany with the end of its historical section.¹⁸⁰ Next he explained the book’s contents, arguing that he wanted to capitalize on his direct and indirect knowledge about the Great Seljuqs and their worthy policies:

Since I had acquired knowledge and information about the state of the Seljuq family, my sheikhs and teachers were their supporters and partisans, and the schools of western Iran and the charities founded by them and their servants were visible all around, I wanted to link this book to the name of the Seljuq sultanate.¹⁸¹

Due to the continued political instability in western Iran, several years passed before Rāwandī finally chose the book’s dedicatee. But this time he just praised his dedicatee Kai Ḥusrau for his conquest of Antalya and did not bother to remind him that it was in 1207 when Kai Ḥusrau, who after the death of his brother Sulaimān II had wrestled the sultanate from his nephew Qiliğ Arslān III b. Sulaimān II (ruled 1204–1205), took control of the city, securing access to the Mediterranean for his otherwise landlocked principality.¹⁸²

180. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: 388–403. For the observation that Rāwandī did not mention Kukğē’s murder, and for the *hiğra* year 600, which began on 10 September 1203 CE, as Kukğē’s death date, see: Meisami, *Persian Historiography*: 256.

181. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: “u-čūn taḥṣīl-i ‘ulūm dar daulat-i āl-i Salğūq karde būdam u-mašāyih u-ustādān-i du‘āgūy dā‘īyān u-hawāḥ‘āhān-i īṣān būdand u-madāris-i ‘Irāq u-ḥairāt dar āfāq azīṣān u-bandegān ḡāhir šud ḥ‘āstam ke īn kitāb bi-nām-i sulṭānī-yi salğūqī bāšad” (62).

182. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: 62 lines 17-20 and note 3, 462 lines 6-8, and XX; compare: Leiser, *History of the Seljuks*: 72; and Bosworth, “Salḡūkids”: 949, where the *hiğra* year 601 should read 603. For the opinion that Kai Ḥusrau had conquered Antioch, which Rāwandī (*Rāḥat*: 128–129) mentioned only in connection with sultan Malik Ṣāh I b. Alp Arslān (ruled 1073–1092) and his vizier Nizām al-Mulk (died 1092), see:

Rāwandī presented his decision making process in a concise and straight-forward manner and continued in this vein when he explicated the contents of the *Rāḥat* in the third step. He began with a short description of the various parts and chapters.¹⁸³ A comparison of this outline with the actual text of the *Rāḥat* suggests that Rāwandī wrote this paragraph not only for his dedicatee as summary of the miscellany's contents but also as a roadmap organizing his own writing process. But toward the end of the third part on courtly education Rāwandī abandoned his own outline and finished after the chapter about numerical divination, effectively omitting two of the earlier announced chapters. The changes between the announced and the realized text concern two chapters that touch upon issues of sexuality: a short survey of virility drugs and a small selection of bawdry jokes. Since Rāwandī had initially justified the planned inclusion of sexually explicit humor as the necessary comic relief at the end of a very serious book about the rise and fall of the Great Seljuq sultans, his later decision to omit these chapters is not a complete surprise.¹⁸⁴ The change does imply, though, that Rāwandī wrote the *Rāḥat* in a linear process, from beginning to end, adjusting its contents as he was moving along, and

Meisami, *Persian Historiography*: 254; compare the reference to the conquest of Antioch in Browne, "Account": 582.

183. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: 63–64.

184. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: "u-faṣlī čand dar adwiya u-ašriba ke bāh-rā qūwat dihad u-āḥir ḥatm bar maḍāḥikī čand u-hazlīyāt kunam tā mutašaffihān-i īn kitāb-rā čūn az ǧidd-i ān u-ḥikāyat-i buzurgān malāl gīrad bidān tafarruǧī kunand u-kūtah nazarān ke az rūḥ-i suḥan mahrūm bāšand bi-sabab-i ān maḍāḥik īn kitāb-rā muṭālaʿe kunand u-ǧikr-i maḥāmid-i aḥlāq-i īn pādīšāh-i ḥūb sīrat u-īn taḥt dār ǧawān-i baḥt hame kas biḥ "ānad" a short section about medicines and potions that give strength to virility. At the end let me finish with some jokes and risqué stories so that careful readers may find in them relief from this book when fatigue hits them because of its seriousness and the tale of great men. Short-sighted people, who lack a sense of eloquence, may study this book because of these jokes. But may everyone read the account of the commendable actions of the morals of this monarch with a good character and this young man of fortune on the throne! (63). Compare the justification of the later omission at the beginning of the third autobiographical chapter: 457 line 20–458 line 5.

having no inhibitions about openly admitting to his dedicatee a deviation from his own outline. This observation is pertinent to the debate about how Rāwandī organized the compilation and writing of his miscellany: Did he hastily and hence superficially revise the *Rāḥat* after he had finally chosen Kai Ḥusrau as dedicatee?¹⁸⁵ Or did he write the closing and opening panegyrics as well as the autobiographical statements last?¹⁸⁶ Any judgment on this matter is ultimately derived from assumptions about Rāwandī's overall literary skills because, at least in theory, both the initial announcement of these chapters and their final exclusion could be the result of a conscious rhetoric strategy. Through the projected inclusion of *muğūn* and *suhf* in his miscellany, Rāwandī paid tribute to the literary conventions of his time, while their final omission could reflect second thoughts about his dedicatee's attitude toward sexually explicit material.¹⁸⁷

Rāwandī followed the survey of contents with three gestures that comprise his sense of authorship. First, he asked for the reader's generosity toward his mistakes and blunders.¹⁸⁸ Then he cursed everyone who messed with his text and misappropriated his

185. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: XIX–XXI; and A.H. Morton in Swietochowski, *Illustrated Poetry*: 53.

186. Meisami, *Persian Historiography*: 239, 254, and 256.

187. For an introduction to the attitudes toward *muğūn* and *suhf* in medieval Arabic and Persian literatures, see: Sprachman, *Suppressed Persian*: vii–lviii. During the last two decades research on sexuality and literature has become a less disreputable enterprise, and the loss of stigmatization has also positively affected the research on medieval Arabic and Persian literatures. But the attitudes toward sex, gender, and the body indifferent western societies are almost incompatible. In German scholarship *muğūn* and *suhf* are usually ignored and avoided, and in French scholarship there is a tendency to perceive medieval Islamic societies as unburdened by sexual repression. As representative examples of both approaches, see: Ammann, *Vorbild und Vernunft*; and Chebel, *L'Esprit de sérail*.

188. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: “u-agar [buzurgān] bar ḡarīme-ī yā sahwī yā ḥilāl u-zalālī iṭṭalā° yāband dāman-i °afw bi-rū pūšand u-dar qadḥ u-izhār-i ma° āyib nakūšand” *If in the course of reading they [i.e., great men] find a crime, an error, or a gap and omission, may they cover it with the skirt of forgiveness and not strive for ridicule and the disclosure of the defects!* (64).

work.¹⁸⁹ Finally, he strengthened his claim to be writing an authoritative work through identifying Nīšābūrī as the author of his main source for the institutional history of the Great Seljuq sultanate.¹⁹⁰ Rāwandī's dependance on Nīšāpūrī's chronicle could boost the authority of his institutional history because he introduced Nīšābūrī as the tutor of the sultans Mas'ūd (ruled 1134–1152) and Arslān (ruled 1161–1176). That Rāwandī did not bother to comment on the chronological problems that follow from Nīšābūrī's tutoring these two sultans for any conjecture of Nīšābūrī's date of death is not surprising, since precise dating, as mentioned above, is rare throughout the autobiographical statement.¹⁹¹ The strategic value of the Nīšābūrī reference is its direct support of Rāwandī's authority because he based a major portion of his miscellany on an eyewitness report about Great Seljuq politics. Neither of these three gestures is particularly medieval or Islamic. Our contemporary disclaimers of unintended error and oversight, as well as the copyright of our intellectual labor, are differently expressed and inserted at other places within a book. Likewise, the quality of an author's sources is still an important criterion whenever we judge a work on its merits. Yet Rāwandī's poor reputation among twentieth-century historians stems in part from his frank admission that until the reign of Tuğril III he relied

189. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: “du‘āgūy-i daulat Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. Sulaimān al-Rāwandī ta’rīḥ-hā-yi daulat-i āl-i salāṭīn Salḡūq mī nawīsad bar sabīl-i iḥtišār u-ṣad hazār la‘nat bi-ḡān u-ḥān u-mān u-zan u-farzandan-i ānkas mī firistad ke azīn kitāb ḥarfī yā kalame-yī ḥaḍf kunad yā ziyādat u-nuqṣānī nawīsad yā ta‘nī zanad u-taraṣṣuf kunad” *The petitioner to the state Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. ‘Alī b. Sulaimān al-Rāwandī is writing the stories about the state of the sultans of the Seljuq family in a concise manner and is uttering a hundred-thousand curses upon life, house and property, and wife and children of that person who either omits a letter or a word from this book, or writes a supplement and an abridgment, or changes and appropriates its text.* (64).

190. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: 64 line 20–65 line 1; for the Persian text, see above, chapter II, note 201.

191. For a not fully explained suggestion of how to resolve this chronological problem, see: Meisami, *Persian Historiography*: 255.

on Nīšāpūrī's work.¹⁹² The statement has been taken as evidence for the charge that Rāwandī simply copied another scholar's chronicle, although the extant manuscript evidence for both works, already discussed in the previous chapter, does not support this criticism. The *Rāḥat* is the oldest known witness to the text of Nīšāpūrī's Seljuq chronicle, and it is therefore difficult to argue on the basis of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Nīšāpūrī manuscripts whether and how Rāwandī revised and rewrote Nīšāpūrī's text.¹⁹³

Rāwandī combined his survey of contents with an explanation of his intent for writing the miscellany. Conversely, his understanding of contemporary reading objectives is expressed in connection with his consideration of the contents and the purposes it serves. He related the *Rāḥat* to the curriculum that prepared rulers for their tasks because he observed that princes read about their predecessors.¹⁹⁴ The principle that a monarch can learn about the business of holding office and wielding power through studying the biographies of other monarchs is neither original nor disputed. Rāwandī

192. Luther, "Islamic Rhetoric": 95; A.H. Morton in Swietochowski, *Illustrated Poetry*: 54; and Meisami, *Persian Historiography*: 237–239. For the conclusion that the *Rāḥat* is basically a continuation of Nīšāpūrī's Seljuq chronicle, compare: de Blois, "Saldjūkids": 971.

193. Meisami, *Persian Historiography*: 244–246 and 255–256. Meisami tried to absolve Rāwandī from the charge of being a unreliable historian by claiming that he did not write historiography. Her observation that Rāwandī added a rhetorical layer to Nīšāpūrī's text is based solely on the text of imprints. She concluded nonetheless that the use of rhetorical devices documents that Rāwandī, unlike Nīšāpūrī, did not write historiography but an edifying text. She adduced as supporting evidence the speculation that the greater part of the *Rāḥat* was written for the young sultan Ṭuḡril III, whose untimely death thwarted Rāwandī's plan.

194. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: "u-ʿilmī ke mulūk-rā bāyad ke baʿda az ʿilm-i šarīʿat u-mā yaḥtāḡu ṭāʿat u-tauḥīd u-arkān-i dīn bidānand siyār-i mulūk u-aḥbār u-taʾrīḥ-i pādīšāhān-ast ... sīrat u-ṭarīqat-i har yik biḥʾānand" *The knowledge that kings must have, after they have understood the law, that which needs obedience, the unity of God, and the pillars of the faith, concerns the characters of kings as well as stories and datable events about monarchs. ...they may read about every one's character and way of life* (65).

used this conventional consideration to determine more precisely the relationship between the Seljuqs and the Abbasids. The acknowledgment of the Abbasid caliphate is necessitated by Rāwandī's staunch Ḥanafite partisanship, justifies his decision to include an institutional history of the Seljuq sultanate in the miscellany, and serves as oblique praise for the ancestors of his dedicatee Kai Ḥusrau. The subsequent commendation of Ṭuḡril Beg (ruled 1040–1063), the first Seljuq sultan to be acknowledged by the Abbasids, provides an additional argument for the value of the *Rāḥat* because his dedicatee Kai Ḥusrau may read about the grand exploits of his pious ancestors. Rāwandī's efforts to highlight the miscellany's merits should not be dismissed lightly as just another cliché because no one wants to be caught red-handed writing or reading a book that does not warrant either.

Rāwandī declared that among the dynasties acknowledging the Sunnite caliphate of the Abbasids the Seljuqs were the most pious and regal.¹⁹⁵ He supported this claim with an undated anecdote about how the Abbasids acknowledged the territorial claims of the first Seljuq sultan Ṭuḡril I Beg (ruled 1040–1063).¹⁹⁶ That in this anecdote the Abbasid caliph al-Qā'im bi-Amr Allāh (ruled 1031–1075) is not even mentioned illustrates the relative insignificance of the Abbasids for Seljuq politics at the beginning of the thirteenth century. There is no need to properly identify an individual within the institution of the Sunnite caliphate in Baghdad. But the anecdote also reverses the

195. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: “u-dar millat-i Islam ba‘da az ḥulafā-yi rāšidīna dar daulat-i banī al-‘Abbās pādīshāhānī dīndārtar u-buzurgwārtar az āl-i Salḡūq nabūdand” *Within the Islamic community, after the four rightly-guided caliphs, there were no monarchs in the state of the Abbasids more pious and more magnanimous than the Seljuq family.* (65).

196. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: 65 line 14–66 line 1.

protocol of victory announcements, since usually the conqueror would send out a note to the Abbasid caliph, describing his territorial gains and assuring the caliph of his loyalty to the Sunnite caliphate.¹⁹⁷ The anecdote nicely illustrates how ʿUğril Beg could draw on his knowledge of the Koran to fend off doubts about the legitimacy of his rule. After al-Qā'im had sent a messenger to recognize the power of the Seljuq conqueror, ʿUğril Beg's representative received the oath of loyalty to the Seljuq sultanate in the newly conquered cities. The local authorities couched their official submission to ʿUğril Beg in the Koran verse 3:26 that is associated with the usurpation of power: "Thou givest the kingship to whom Thou wilt."¹⁹⁸ Their gesture of submission recognized the de-facto authority of the Seljuq sultanate, while alluding to the transience of human rule.¹⁹⁹ ʿUğril Beg's repartee to al-Qā'im played on this verse, though he used the Koran verses 2:247 and 28:68 to present his victories as the sign of God's support of Seljuq rule: "God gives the kingship

197. Leiser, *History of the Seljuks*: 35–36. Compare the description of ʿUğril Beg's victory announcement (*fathnāme*) to al-Qā'im in Rāwandī, *Rāhat*: 102 line3–104 line 2; and Nīšāpūrī, *Salḡūqnāme*: 17–18. In neither source is this event precisely dated, though it followed the Seljuq defeat of the Ghaznavid army of sultan Mas'ūd b. Maḥmūd (ruled 1031–1040) near Marw in 1040.

198. Rāwandī, *Rāhat*: "az dār al-ḥilāfe ... rasūlī bi-ḥadrat-i sulṭān-i sa'īd ... firistādand ... [sulṭān] bāz pas firistād u-bi-har šahrī ke rasīde būd muqarrabān ḥ'ānde būdand: qul Allāhumma mālik al-mulk tu'tī al-mulk man tašā'u" *they conveyed from the capital of the caliphate ... a messenger to the excellency, the happy sultan, ... then [the sultan] sent [him] on. In every city that he reached the elites recited: Say: Oh God, Master of kingship, Thou givest the kingship to whom Thou wilt. (3:26). (65).*

199. For examples that document that this Koran verse—"qul Allāhumma mālik al-mulk tu'tī al-mulk man tašā'u wa-man tanzi'u al-mulk mimman ta tašā'u" *Thou givest the kingship to whom Thou wilt and seizest the kingship from whom Thou wilt (3:26)*—was a two-edged sword, see: Heidemann, *Aleppiner Kalifat*: 337 notes 33 and 35. The verse appeared on coinage: Aḥmad b. 'Abd Allāh (died 882), who contested the Saffarid control of Khorasan, issued coins with this legend in Herat and Nishapur between 880 and 882. Later the verse was used on many coins issued by the Ilkhanid khans Hülegü (died 1256) and Abaqa (died 1282). In contrast, the Ayyubid ruler of Diyarbakr, al-Malik al-Kāmil (ruled 1244–1260), is alleged to have recited this verse before Hülegü killed him.

to whom He will. He chooses; they have not the choice.”²⁰⁰ The anecdote is a remarkable example of backhanded one-upmanship because Ṭuḡril Beg used the Koran to explicitly state that God, and not an Abbasid caliph, chooses who is ruling over the *umma*. In addition, it prepares the praise for the achievements of the Seljuqs that will set an example for future rulers.²⁰¹ While the anecdote addresses the complicated relationship between a Sunni institution deemed irreplaceable and the Seljuq conquerors, the praise listed the accomplishments of Seljuq rule so that in western Iran the visible traces and palpable effects of their sultanate borne out their claim to power. Rāwandī acclaimed the Seljuqs for both the construction of landmarks, such as mosques, schools, caravanserais, and dams, and the employment of scholars, mystics, ascetics, and relatives of the prophet Muḥammad.²⁰² The praise allowed Rāwandī again to associate himself with the Seljuq family. He had received an excellent education because the Great Seljuqs had

200. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: “u-dar ḡawāb-i ān bā dār al-ḥilāfe firistād wa-Allāh yu’tī mulka-hū man yašā’u wa-yaḥtāru mā kāna la-hum al-ḥiyara” *He sent in the response to that to the capital of the caliphate: God gives the kingship to whom He will. (2:247) He chooses; they have not the choice. (28:68). (65–66).*

201. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: 66 lines 1-16. The transition is aided by the wordplay between *ḥiyara* (choice) and *ḥairāt* (good deeds), which are both derived from the Arabic root ḥ-y-r; see: Lane: 829 s.v. ḥair, and 830 s.v. ḥiyara. Whether readers perceived the two words are related, though not as singular and plural, is likely to have depended on their familiarity with the Koran and their training in literary Arabic.

202. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: “u-čandān ḥairāt ke dar daulat-i salāṭīn-i āl-i Salḡūq u-aiyām-i humāyūn-i īšān zāhir šud az iḥyā-yi ma’ālim-i dīn u-tašyīd-i qawā’id-i muslimānī u-binā-hā-yi masāḡid u-inšā-yi madāris u-ribāṭāt u-qanāṭir u-idrār u-anzār u-auqāf bar ‘ulamā u-sādāt u-zuhhār u-abrār dar hīč rūzgār nabūd” *So many blessings, which were visible in the state of the sultans of the Seljuq family and during their auspicious days because of the revival of the landmarks of faith, the development of the foundations of Islam, the buildings with mosques, and the establishment of schools, caravanserais, dams, stipends, grants, and religious foundations for religious authorities, relatives of the Prophet, ascetics, and pious men, were not at any other time. (66).*

generously funded his teachers,²⁰³ yet he himself was too young to have worked for the Great Seljuqs. Since he had not compromised his own integrity, he could convert the fact that his mentors had been the beneficiaries of the Seljuq policy of strengthening Ḥanafite scholarship in western Iran into an advantage.

Rāwandī's remarks about Nīšābūrī, his main source for the Great Seljuq sultanate, and the merits of knowing Seljuq history were completed with an explanation about his selection criteria for the institutional history. Rāwandī acknowledged the need to balance the formal constraints of a miscellany with the multitude of data required by an institutional history to honor Kai Ḥusrau:

As much as this compilation tolerates, I will include those uncommon circumstances, which happened in their auspicious state: the situation of justice and monarchy, the events related to kinfolks of the Seljuq family, the report of the beginning of their rise, the conduct in their search for sovereignty, and the duration of the life and reign of every one. I bring the names of their viziers, chamberlains, and atabegs ... so that the victorious sultan, the abundant rain for the Faith, may read, may consider with his noble gaze, may become honored.²⁰⁴

An author's announcement that he has used his sense of discretion differs from any claim to originality, yet Rāwandī's remark is pertinent to any exploration of how he used

203. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: “u-du‘āgūy-i daulat ... agarče az daulat-i sulṭan Ṭuḡril bi-sabab-i qaṣr-i ‘umr-ū mahrūm būd u-az ni‘mat-i ū nayāsūd ammā mašāyih u-ustādān-i ū ‘ulamā-yi kibār az ni‘mat-i āl-i Salḡūq āsūde būdand ... u-taḥṣīl-i ‘ilm bihtarīn manālī u-zibātarīn mālī būd dar ān daulat kardam u-čūn az huṭām-i dunyāwī ḥāṣilī nabūd nayāzurdam” *Although the petitioner to the state ... was deprived of sultan Ṭuḡril's good fortune for the reason of the brevity of his life and did not find his peace of mind through the sultan's favor, his sheikhs and teachers, on the other hand, were great religious authorities because of the favor of the Seljuq family. ... In this state I acquired knowledge, which was the best profit and the most beautiful property. Since this was not the result of worldly vanities I was not injured.* (66).

204. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: “ḥāl-i ‘adl u-pādišāhī u-ta’rīḥ-i ansāb-i āl-i Salḡūq u-dīkr-i ibtidā-yi nahdat u-ḥarakat dar ṭalab-i mulk u-muddat-i ‘umr u-pādišāhī-yi har yik waqāyī‘-i ḡarīb ke dar daulat-i humāyūn-i īšān uftād čundānk īn maḡmū‘ tamahḥul kunad īrād ḥ‘āham kard u-asāmī-yi wuzarā u-ḥuḡḡāb u-atābikān-i īšān ... biyāram tā sulṭān-i qāḥir Ġiyāṭ al-Dīn biḥ‘ānad u-bi-naẓar-i ašraf-i ū malḥūz šawad u-mušarraḥ gardad” (67).

Nīšābūrī's Seljuq chronicle. His assertion of having produced a discretionary compilation of his sources should be taken seriously because scribes, calligraphers, and scholars distinguished between exact copy (*naql*) and recension (*nusha*).²⁰⁵

Rāwandī's claim to a selective, and hence critical, approach to the available data for the Great Seljuq sultanate is further strengthened by the pragmatic purpose of the part on institutional history in particular and of the miscellany in general. Rāwandī concluded the subsection on the *Rāḥat*'s contents with a statement of his educational goal for Kai Ḥusrau. The goal is presented as the wish that Kai Ḥusrau might learn from his ancestors and support religious schools and religious authorities.²⁰⁶ The conventional argument that, unlike earthly treasures,²⁰⁷ such pious deeds do bear on the quality of a person's afterlife should be seen together with the political instability that Rāwandī experienced in western Iran after the conquest of the Khwarazm Shahs. Moreover, the focus on the good deed (*ḥair*) links the end of this subsection with its beginning, where Rāwandī compared

205. Gacek, *Arabic Manuscript Tradition*: 140 s.v. *nusha*, and 144 s.v. *naql*; compare Messick, *Calligraphic State*: "Authorship in the manuscript era also had its notions of drafts and finished products. There was a decisive step in which the text moved from a tentative draft or a preliminary oral version to a written-out or dictatable work suitable for circulation. The finished manuscript could circulate either in closed, 'genealogical' networks, that is, through the links of instruction with student or colleague transcribing, or in open networks of commercial exchange, involving hired copyists." (118).

206. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: "u-andīše kunad tā az ān saṭhā-yi ḡamīl ... hīč bāqī mānad illā ḥairī ke bikardand u-madāris u-masākin-i ʿulamā ke rūz bi-rūz dar ān-ḡā taḥṣīl-i ʿilm-i šarīʿat mī rawad u-tawāb bi-rawān-i īṣān mī rasad ... Malikšāh u-Mahmūd u-Barkiyāruq u-Muḥammad u-Ṭuḡril u-Masʿūd-rā bidān madāris ke dar dār al-malik-i Iṣfahān u-Hamādān sāhte and nām-i nīkū muddaḥar ḥʾāhad būd az taḥṣīl-i tawāb-i ḡamīl u-ṭanā-yi ḡazīl ḥāṣil" *May he think that, so long as from these beautiful endeavors ... nothing may remain forever, except for the good deed that they once did and for the schools and houses of religious authorities because day by day the acquisition of legal knowledge happens there and the praise touches their way of life ... for Malik Šāh, Mahmūd, Barkiyāruq, Muḥammad, Ṭuḡril, and Masʿūd a good name will accumulate with these schools, which they had built in the capitals Isfahan and Hamadan, and will follow from the acquisition of beautiful praise and great eulogy* (67).

207. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: 67 lines 11-12.

voluntary alms (*ṣadaqe*) set up as *waqfs* with money spent on panegyrics. To add weight to this goal, and to underline the gravity of the present situation in western Iran, Rāwandī moved beyond his focus on his dedicatee Kai Ḥusrau, and appealed first to other readers of the *Rāḥat* and then to God.²⁰⁸ Rāwandī expressed the hope that the account of the Great Seljuqs' good deeds motivate these other readers to ask for divine support on behalf of Kai Ḥusrau and his sultanate. His succinct invocation that God may fulfill this wish concludes the subsection. This extra weight on his educational goal for Kai Ḥusrau is structurally necessary to mark the transition from the autobiographical section, in which Rāwandī concentrated on outlining a relationship between his dedicatee Kai Ḥusrau and the dedicated miscellany, to its actual text. The appeal to other readers also prepares the change of subject matter, the move from the personal plea for patronage to a neutral compilation of the institutional history of the Great Seljuq sultanate and court etiquette. Although the question of whom Rāwandī imagined as readers of the *Rāḥat*, aside from his dedicatee Kai Ḥusrau, is impossible to answer, Rāwandī assumed a reading culture at the Rum Seljuq court, in which a book dedicated to the sultan would reach a readership beyond its sole dedicatee.

208. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: “ḡaraḍ-i īn du‘āgūy ba‘da al-ḥaṭṭ ‘alā al-ḥair ān-ast ke ḥ’ānandegān ... baqā-yi daulat u-fuṣḥat-i mamlakat u-i‘lā-yi kalime-yi pādīshāhī u-imdād-i nuṣrat-i ilahī u-zafar-i rāyat-i manṣūr u-ārāyiš-i tāḡ u-taḥt-i ḥalaf-i īshān sulṭān-i qāhīr ... bi-namāz-i šab u-ṣadaqāt u-ṣalāt u-tā‘āt az ḥudā-yi ‘azza wa-ḡalla dar ḥ’āhand malik-i ta‘ālā īn umnīya-i karāmat kunād bi-Muḥammad wa-āli-hī” *It is the purpose of this petitioner, after urging the good deed, that the readers ... may petition from God who is powerful and glorious the eternity of the state, the liberty of the kingdom, the advancement of the authority of the monarchy, the support for the divine triumph, the victory of the triumphant banner, and the adornment of the crown and throne of their successor, the victorious sultan, ... with evening prayers, voluntary alms, blessings, and acts of devotion. May the sublime king God grant this wish—by Muḥammad and his family* (67–68).

Rāwandī returned to the survey of contents of the *Rāḥat* at the end of the third part on courtly education.²⁰⁹ In the short passage that formally constitutes the third subsection of the second section of the autobiographical statement, Rāwandī explained, as already discussed, why he wrote only six of the originally planned eight chapters. The concluding invocation on behalf of Kai Ḥusrau is extended through a panegyric poem that illustrates how all of creation pay the sultan homage, bringing back the focus on the dedicatee of the miscellany.²¹⁰ As announced in the survey of contents, Rāwandī regularly inserted invocations and panegyrics of Kai Ḥusrau into the miscellany.²¹¹ At this point in the text, the combination of an invocation composed in formal prose with a complete panegyric poem produces a suspension that is necessary to return the focus to Rāwandī's plea for Kai Ḥusrau's patronage. The poem separates the three parts of the miscellany from the third autobiographical section, which doubles as the epilogue of the *Rāḥat*.

III. i. Choice of patron

The last section of the autobiographical statement connects Rāwandī's personal circumstances in western Iran with Kai Ḥusrau's sultanate in Anatolia.²¹² After

209. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: 457 line 20–458 line 5.

210. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: 458 lines 5-13 (*duʿā*), and 458 line 14–459 line 13 (*šīr*); compare the two previous invocations in the second section of the autobiographical statement: 60 lines 5-9, and 68 lines 5-6. For a formal description of this stanzaic poem, and an annotated translation of Ġāğarmī's version, see: A.H. Morton in Swietochowski, *Illustrated Poetry*: 54 and 58–61. For the problem of determining the poem's author and original *mamdūh*, see above, chapter II, notes 220-221.

211. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: 63 lines 11-12; for a complete list of all references to Kai Ḥusrau, see the name index: 543 s.v. Kaiḥusrau. For the full text of Rāwandī's announcement, see below, chapter IV, note 67.

212. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: 459–464.

concluding of the miscellany with its third part about courtly etiquette, Rāwandī returned to contemporary politics. The final merging of Rāwandī's life with Seljuq rule reflects for the last time his central argument that a learned eyewitness of Great Seljuq politics in western Iran can contribute to the success of Rum Seljuq politics in Anatolia. That Rāwandī framed the *Rāḥat* with the story of how he came to write it gives the miscellany formal cohesion because the various parts and chapters are bound together by the prologue and epilogue. The end of the miscellany is followed by the conclusion of Rāwandī's personal story about how to pick his dedicatee, and thus combines the linear movement of writing the *Rāḥat* with the hope for a circular movement of politics through the reconstitution of Seljuq rule over western Iran. Since the identity of Rāwandī's dedicatee is known from the introductory panegyric of the Rum Seljuq sultan,²¹³ the strategic role of this section is not to reveal the identity of his dedicatee but to develop a conclusive argument about the historical inevitability of Rāwandī's choice. Accordingly, the epilogue is presented as a three-step exercise in how to interpret a sign sent by God: “*ḍikr-i ḥ̲wāb*.”²¹⁴ Rāwandī's prophetic dream about the rise of a Seljuq sultan is first validated by word of mouth, and then confirmed by Kai Ḥusrau's own military endeavors in Anatolia. In the final invocation Rāwandī linked Kai Ḥusrau's divine protection with his own search for patronage, hoping that the *Rāḥat* would reach the sultan.²¹⁵

213. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: 18–38.

214. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: 459.

215. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: 464 lines 14–18.

Table 9. The third autobiographical section of the *Rāḥat*.***The dedication of the Rāḥat***

- i** Rāwandī's dream = p.459–461
 - ii** Ġamāl al-Dīn's praise for both Kai Ḥusrau and the *Rāḥat* = p.461–462
 - iii** Kai Ḥusrau's military exploits = p.462–464
- < insertion: *du'ā'* on behalf of Kai Ḥusrau, the *Rāḥat*, and Rāwandī >

The first subsection is characterized by the dramatic pathos of a soap opera.

Rāwandī described his abysmal situation after the death of Tuğril III in 1194 and his hope for a Seljuq sultan who would defeat the Khwarazm Shahs.²¹⁶ In the midst of this despair, he dreamed that the ascendancy of a Seljuq sultan was already celebrated in heaven.²¹⁷ The victorious sultan was identified as a direct descendent of Arslān Isrā'īl b. Salğūq (died c.1034), who was his seventh paternal forefather.²¹⁸ On the one hand, Kai Ḥusrau was only one of the eleven sons of Qiliğ Arslān II b. Mas'ūd (ruled 1156–1192). He fought with his brothers Malik Šāh (died 1192) and Sulaimān II as well as his nephew Qiliğ Arslān III b. Sulaimān II over the sultanate because the Seljuqs were practicing a tribal system of power sharing among brothers.²¹⁹ On the other, the stress on Isrā'īl

216. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: “gāhī bā ḥʷūd mī guftam bī maḥdūmī u-mamdūḥ-i karīmī bāğ-i dāniš bī bar u-muḥmal u-muʿaṭṭal mānad u-bī šilāt-i ḡasīm az šabīḥʷūn-i faqr aiman natawānam būd ... u-gāhī mī andīšīdam ke kāškī māhī az burğ-i salāṭīn yā pādīšāhī az pādīšāhān rūy-i zamīn-i salğūqī-yī nižād zāhir šūdī ke dil bar ḥidmat-i ū muṭmaʿin būdī” *Sometimes I said to myself: Without a master and a laudable, generous person the garden of knowledge remains without fruits, undotted and idle. Without fat prizes for poems I could not be safe against the night attack of poverty. ... Sometimes I thought: I wish that from the constellation of the sultans a moon, or from the monarchs a monarch, had risen over the land of Seljuq descent so that the heart were assured in serving him.* (460).

217. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: 460 line 12–461 line1.

218. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: 460 lines 19-20; for the complete lineage of Kai Ḥusrau, see: 64 lines 9-11; and for the role of Isrā'īl b. Salğūq within the process of establishing the Great Seljuq sultanate, see: 87–92. Compare the genealogical charts in Leiser, *History of the Seljuks*.

219. Leiser, *History of the Seljuks*: 71–72; compare 100–101.

allowed Rāwandī to imply that a descendent of Isrā'īl would revenge the death of Ṭuḡril III, a descendent of Mīkā'il b. Salḡūq, because Isrā'īl's death at the hands of the Ghaznavids had been revenged by his brothers. Moreover, the analogy between the deaths of Isrā'īl and Ṭuḡril III endowed the revenge of the death of Ṭuḡril III with the potential to introduce a new expansion of Seljuq rule because Rāwandī presented the revenge of Isrā'īl's death as the beginning of the rise of the Great Seljuq sultanate.²²⁰ After the dream's allegory, Rāwandī began the mundane work of compiling the *Rāḥat* in a state of happy anticipation that turned into confusion about how to identify the man whom the dream had predicted.²²¹

The occurrence of a prophetic dream in an autobiographical statement is not surprising: medieval Islamic scholars considered dreams an important means of obtaining knowledge.²²² There was also a continuous Iranian tradition of dream narratives that was drawing on both Hellenistic and pre-Islamic Middle-Eastern traditions, ranging from

220. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: “u-daulat-i āl-i Salḡūq az Isrā'īl ke haftum ḡadd-i sulṭān-ast barḡāst u-mihtar u-sarwar-i barādarān būd ke Maḥmūd-i Sibuktigīn ḡadr kard u-zinhār ḥūrd u-dar ḡabs bidāšt barādarān bi-kīn tūḡtan barḡāstand mulk bidān sabab bidīšān rasīd” *The state of the family of Salḡūq rose from Isrā'īl, who is the seventh paternal ancestor of the sultan. He was the eldest and the leader of the brothers, when Maḥmūd b. Sebūktigin [i.e., the Ghaznavid sultan] betrayed him, broke a treaty, and threw him into prison. The brothers rose to retaliate. Therefore the kingship fell to them.* (460). The Turkish bias of such a hagiographical interpretation of Isrā'īl's death has been pointed out by Cahen, “Arslan b. Saldjūq”: 662; and Bosworth, “Saldjūkids”: 938.

221. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: “man az ān ḡāb-i nūšīn biḡustam u-ṭarab paiwastam kamar-i īn ḡidmat dar bastam ... ḡiḡ ḡā nišānī namī yāftam” *I escaped from this sweet dream and was overcame with joy. I tied my belt for this task ... I found nowhere a sign.* (461).

222. For introductory remarks about the approaches to dreams in medieval Islamic societies, see: Gustave von Grunebaum in Caillois and Grunebaum, *Dream*: 3–21. For the dream of sovereignty in Buyid and Ṭahirid historiography, see: Mottahedeh, *Loyalty*: 69–71. For very general remarks on prophetic dreams as a literary device of Arabic historiography, see: Robinson, *Historiography*: 151–152. For a semiotic approach to prophetic dreams in Safadī's biographical dictionary of the blind, see: Malti-Douglas, “Dreams”: 142–145. For methodological reflections on dreams as historical sources, compare: Koselleck, *Vergangene Zukunft*: 283–299.

Cyrus legend through the *Šāhnāme* to Safavid historiography.²²³ But despite the cultural context and the literary tradition, Iqbāl, Morton, Carole Hillenbrand and Meisami interpreted Rāwandī's use of the dream narrative as a veiled confession that he originally composed the miscellany for Kai Ḥusrau's brother Sulaimān II.²²⁴ As there is not sufficient evidence to definitely reject or confirm this esoteric interpretation, the more interesting question is whether Rāwand's admission that he had first picked another dedicatee, and hence had to revise, perhaps on short notice, the miscellany for his prospective patron, would have strengthened his plea for Kai Ḥusrau's patronage: Why would Kai Ḥusrau be swayed to extend favors to a foreigner from western Iran who had originally planned to petition his rival? The dramatic tension of the first subsection's cliff-hanger ending mirrors again the political confusion and instability in western Iran and hence appears as an apposite strategy to remind his dedicatee of the author's need for protection.

223. For Firdausī's dream of the Ghaznavid sultan Maḥmūd, see: Firdausī, *Šāhnāme*, 1: 17–18 lines 169–208; compare: Meisami, "The Past": 257–258. For the topos of sheikh Šāfi's dream in the introduction to Safavid chronicles, as well as short reflections on the Timurid and Ottoman historiographical tradition of political dreams, see: Quinn, *Historical Writing*: 68–76.

224. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: XIX–XXI; Faḥrī. *Ḥusrev u Šīrīn*: 205 note 896; A.H. Morton in Swietochowski, *Illustrated Poetry*: "Rāwandī does, in the conclusion, say more or less what happened"(53); Hillenbrand, "Rāwandī": 460; and Meisami, *Persian Historiography*: 254–255; compare: de Fouchécour, *Moralia*: 429. This conclusion, however, did not occur to Schefer, "Tableau du règne": 11; Browne, "Account": 568–569; or Luther, "Islamic Rhetoric": 95. As mentioned above, it appeared that Iqbāl was the first to suggest this interpretation, which hinges on the following passage: Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: "andīše-yi gālaṭ raft u-guft magar ū bāšad īn kitāb bi-nām-i ū ḥ"āstam pardāhtan čūn aḥwāl bi-šarḥ dāniste šud ū gāšib-i mulk būd u-bi-gadr bi-dast furū girifte u-pidar pādīšāh-i ḡawānbaht-rā ḡallada Allāh mulka-hū walī-yi 'ahd karde būd" *Being led astray I thought: Perhaps he is the one, and I want to give this book perfection with his name. When the detailed circumstances became known, he was the usurper of kingship and had become perfidious, and the father had declared the fortunate monarch—may God make his kingdom everlasting—his successor.* (461). For the philological implications of this assumption for the conjectured transmission of the *Rāḥat*, see above, chapter II, note 225.

After the buildup of confusion in the first subsection, Rāwandū used the remainder of the text to resolve the puzzle. In the second subsection, he introduced a personal witness of Kai Ḥusrau's sultanate, whom he met in Hamadan after Kai Ḥusrau's conquest of Antalya in 1207.²²⁵ There is no external evidence to confirm the historical existence of the merchant and scholar Ğamāl al-Dīn Abū Bakr b. Abī al-ʿAlā' al-Rūmī, but the eulogies indicate that Rāwandī assumed him to be alive when he was writing this passage.²²⁶ That his name contains the *nisba* al-Rūmī is an ambiguous detail. While this *nisba* links Ğamāl al-Dīn to Anatolia, and hence indirectly underlines his credentials as an eyewitness of the Rum Seljuq sultanate, it is too common to allow relating the name to a more concrete historical context. Nonetheless noteworthy is that Rāwandī's treatment of Ğamāl al-Dīn is not different from his treatment of his maternal uncle Abū al-Faḍl or his friend Aḥmad al-Bazzāz. These men drop unceremoniously out of sight after they have fulfilled their role within the autobiographical statement, indicating that Rāwandī aimed at keeping his text free of details that did not directly strengthen his principal argument.

Rāwandī divided Ğamāl al-Dīn's testimony into two parts. He first described Ğamāl al-Dīn as a political agent—though Rāwandī did not use the term *dāʾī*—who was spreading in Hamadan the word of Kai Ḥusrau's achievements in Anatolia.²²⁷ Then the

225. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: “u-ḥikāyāt-i ... gušūdan-i šahr-i Anṭāliye ... mī guft” *he* [i.e., Ğamāl al-Dīn] *was telling stories about ... the conquest of Antalya* (462).

226. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: 461 lines 21-23, and 462 line 15.

227. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: “dūstdārī u-hawāḥ*āhī-yi ḥāndān-i āl-i Salḡūq azū dīdam ... u-ḥikāyāt-i mašāff bā kāfir u-gušūdan-i šahr-i Anṭāliye ke az dast-i hīč sulṭān u-pādišāh-i muslimān bar naḡāste ast mī guft u-čandīn hazār muslimānān-rā ke sāl-hā asīr u-dalīl dar dast-i kāfir būdand ḡalāṣ dād u-birahānīd” *I saw in*

two men became friends, and Rāwandī sought Ġamāl al-Dīn's opinion on the *Rāḥat*.²²⁸

The strategic rationale of this incident is not especially subtle. Rāwandī faithfully reported how Ġamāl al-Dīn, the partisan of the Rum Seljuqs, had praised his miscellany as a rare achievement,²²⁹ and described how he afterwards prepared its final version for Kai Ḥusrau:

Because the petitioner to the state heard the report about the grandeur and majesty of the lord of the world ... he does not shorten [it] in this book. He writes a fresh book, arranges a new volume, writes it all—from Adam to Doomsday: the stories of the prophets and saints and the kings and rulers of the world, as well as their names and lineages and their lives and secrets—and remembers the admirable character traits of everyone separately, as long as the monarch of Islam Kai Ḥusrau ... may be pleased reading it, and he will choose for his own sake that which is the best and the excellent.²³⁰

The assertive tone of the statement is consistent with Rāwandī's earlier remarks in which he emphasized his authorship. But rewriting and revising outlines and drafts was also standard practice in medieval Islamic societies, where authors, like their colleagues in the Latin West, distinguished between a draft (*musauwada*) and a fair copy (*mubaiyaḍa*).²³¹

him [i.e., Ġamāl al-Dīn] a loving friend and partisan of the ruling Seljuq family. ... he was telling stories about battle with the unbelievers and the conquest of Antalya, which did not fight at all against the hand of the sultan and monarch of the Muslims. He [i.e., Kai Ḥusrau] brought salvation to many thousand Muslims, who for years were captive and humbled at the hand of unbelievers, and set them free. (462).

228. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: 462 lines 15-22.

229. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: “In u^ḥgūbe-yi ḡahān-rā man bidān ḥaḍrat rasānam u-in nādir-i zamān-rā bi-maḥall u-manzil ḥ^wūd dawānam” *I myself would send this marvel of the world to this excellency, and I myself would run to houses and camps with this rarity of our age (462).*

230. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: “u-du^ḥāgūy-i daulat cūn dīkr-i ‘azamat u-saltanat-i ḥudāwand-i ‘ālam ... biṣanīd bidīn kitāb iḥtiṣār nakunad tāze kitābī sāzad nau daftarī pardāzad u-az daur-i ādam tā munqariḍ-i ‘ālam tawārīḡ-i anbiyā u-auliā u-mulūk u-ḡahāndārān u-nām u-nasab u-sīrat u-sarīrat-i īṣān biniwīsad u-siyar-i marḍiye-yi har yik ‘alā ḥaddi-hī yād kunad tā pādīshāh-i Islām Kaiḥusrau ... dar ān muṭāla‘e mī farmāyad u-ānč aḥsan u-aḡwad bāṣad az bahr-i ḥ^wūd iḥtiyār mī kunad” (463).

231. Gacek, *Arabic Manuscript Tradition*: 73 s.v. sawād, and 16 s.v. bayād. For the use of outlines and drafts for the composition of chronicles dedicated to high-ranking officials in the Latin West, see: Schmale, *Funktion und Formen*: 96–97; compare 92–93.

With regard to interpreting Rāwandī's admission of his difficulties in recognizing the prophesied Seljuq sultan during this period of political chaos and instability, the statement appears to reassure the *Rāḥat*'s noble dedicatee that his miscellany is not another quick-and-dirty plea for his patronage because this author took considerable pains in tailoring his work to Kai Ḥusrau. Conversely, how could the strategic objective of securing the sultan's protection be obtained through the unnecessary, as well as clumsy, confession of having lacked the sense of discretion to pick the right dedicatee during the first round?

In the third and final subsection, Rāwandī matched his prophetic dream and Ḡamāl al-Dīn's propaganda with Kai Ḥusrau's military actions. The focus of this subsection is Kai Ḥusrau's unsuccessful attack on Armenia in 1209.²³² Rāwandī presented this military campaign as a divine sign of the sultan's ability to defeat the Khwarazm Shahs in western Iran, although he did not make this connection explicit. The restraint is conspicuous, and suggests a strategic decision through which Rāwandī tried to strengthen his plea for patronage, since otherwise he did not miss any occasion to deplore the rule of the Khwarazm Shahs. From the practical point of view, it was useless to repeat the arguments at the end of the miscellany when the dedicatee was either

232. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: "u-faṭḥ-i Arman u-mankūb kardan-i Līfūn-i la'īn ḥaḍala-hū Allāh wa-la'ana-hū wa-dammara 'alai-hī wa-aḥzā-hu u-ḥiṣār dādan-i wai u-sitadan-i qila'-hā u-wilāyāt-i ū bā dīgar bilād-i Islām ḍamm kardan maqdūr-i hīč pādīšāh-i muslimān nabūde ast u-agar čand rūzī ū-rā ḥilāṣ dād dar ān ta'biye-yī-st fa-maḥhil al-kāfirīn amhilu-hum ruwaidan tā ḥazāyin binigārad u-dafāyin bar ārad u-bi-dūwum nūbat bi-muslimānān sipārad" *The conquest of Armenia—afflicting Leo the Cursed—may God abandon him, damn him, annihilate him, and dishonor him—besieging him, seizing fortresses, and joining his governments with other lands of Islam—was not predestined for any monarch of the Muslims. If he gave him deliverance for some days, in this is a preparation—so respite the unbelievers; delay with them for awhile* (86:17)—*so that he may portray the riches, bring up the buried treasures, and for a second time entrust them to the Muslims.* (463). For the unsuccessful attack on the Armenian king Leo II in 1209, see: Leiser, *History of the Seljuks*: 72–73; in this case Ibrahim Kafesoğlu did not identify his sources. Kai Ḥusrau's Armenian campaign is not mentioned by Bosworth, "Saldjūkids": 948–949.

convinced of the necessary and inevitable reconstitution of Seljuq rule in western Iran or not. The implicit reference to Kai ʔusrau's potential role in western Iran is more efficient because in the closing address to his dedicatee Rāwandī did not digress from Kai ʔusrau's current situation in Anatolia. The oblique connection is reinforced by the Persian *qaṣ̣īda* that follows the autobiographical statement and concludes the *Rāḥat*.²³³ The *radf* of this panegyric for Kai ʔusrau is repeated thirty-one times, and reminds the Rum Seljuq sultan of his obligation to promote justice: "may Kai ʔusrau be party to the cry for justice."²³⁴

To explore the meaning and consequences of Kai ʔusrau's Armenian campaign, Rāwandī relied on the Koran, as he had done earlier in the anecdote about ʔuḡril Beg and his recognition by the Abbasid caliphate. Rāwandī quoted the last verse of the sura about the night star that guides the believer through darkness, ending with the promise that a victory delayed is not a victory denied: "so respite the unbelievers; delay with them for awhile" (86:17). The reference to God's pending relief from despair allows Rāwandī to allude to a similarity in the circumstances of these otherwise incomparable men: Kai ʔusrau after the unsuccessful attack on Armenia and Rāwandī's miserable life under the rule of the Khwarazm Shahs. On the one hand, Rāwandī assured his dedicatee that his lack of success in Armenia motivated Muslims to pray on his behalf because God would

233. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: 464 line19–467 line; the *qāfiya* is -ān.

234. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: "Kai ʔusrau bā dād bād" (464 line 19 ff); the *qaṣ̣īda* opens with a proper *maṭlaʿ* and has thirty distichs.

be victorious through his conquests.²³⁵ On the other, he reminded his dedicatee that God had revealed this verse to console the prophet.²³⁶ Rāwandī concluded this reflection on Kai Ḥusrau's military actions in Armenia with the observation that, while his victories depended on God's assistance, this Christian king was an unworthy enemy for the Muslim sultan.²³⁷ In the final invocation of the autobiographical statement Rāwandī summarized for the last time the personal goal of his miscellany, linking God's protection for the expansion of Kai Ḥusrau's sultanate with his own hopes that the sultan would receive the *Rāḥat* and become his employer.²³⁸

Rāwandī dated each of the three subsections by alluding to military events, even though he did not mention the respective years. This oblique way of dating his text corresponds to his sparing use of dates throughout the autobiographical statement. That Rāwandī reminded his dedicatee of his own military exploits, when he mentioned the

235. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: “u-bidīn fath ke raft dar dār-i Islām har kuḡā ḡabar mī rasad bi-du‘ā namāz-i šab madad-aš mī kunand tā ḡudā-yi ‘azza wa-ḡalla nuṣrat bar ziyādat dārad u-tamāmī-yi bilād-i kufr u-qila‘-hā-yi īšān dar dāḡt u-qabḡ-i ... Kaiḡusrau ... ārad *Wherever the news of this conquest, which slipped away, arrives in the land of Islam, they will help him with invocation and evening prayer, so that God—he is glorious and sublime—will have the victory in excess and will bring all of the lands of unbelief and their fortresses to the capture and possession of ... Kai Ḥusrau.* (464).

236. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: “u-rawān-i paigambar-i mā Muḡammad Muṣṡafā ... bidīn biṣārat āsāyiš-hā yaft” *The soul of our prophet Muḡammad Muṣṡafā ... found peace and tranquility through these glad tidings.* (464).

237. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: “Līfūn-i la‘īn-i ḡwūd ċe sag-ast ān ḡaṣm-i ḡwūd kī-st u-ū ḡwūd ċī-st šamṣīr-i šāh bi-ċunān ḡwūn dast nayālāyad u-mubālāt nanimāyad” *What sort of dog is this Leo the Cursed! Who is that enemy, and what is he himself? The king’s sword will not pollute the hands with such blood and will show no consideration.* (464).

238. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: “malik-i ta‘ālā tā falak-rā ḡumbiṣ u-inqilāb-ast u-zamīn-rā ārām az fitne u-iḡṡirāb rāyāt-i daulat-i pādīšāh-rā har rūz afrāštetar dārad u-ċaṣm-i bad azīn daulat bi-dūr bād u-rasīdan-i īn kitāb bidān ḡadrat ḡaḡaste u-mubārak gardānād u-bande-rā nīz daryāft-i muṡūl dar ḡidmat rūzī kunād bi-Muḡammad wa-āli-hī” *May the sublime King, as long as the heavenly sphere has motion and upheaval and the earth has repose from strife and disturbance, raise higher each day the banners of the monarch’s state. May the evil eye be turned away from this state. May He ensure that this book reaches that auspicious and blessed excellency. May He also make that the servant is received standing upright in the service for his daily bread—by Muḡammad and his family.* (464).

conquest of Antalya in 1207 and the Armenian campaign in 1209, leads to the question of whether there was a court protocol for prospective employees that regulated how to present events which the author only knew from hearsay. Nevertheless, these historical allusions provide important points of reference for the completion of the *Rāḥat* in general and the institutional history of the Great Seljuq sultanate in particular, because they reveal an important gap between the end of the institutional history and the *terminus ad quem* for sending the miscellany from Hamadan to the Rum Seljuq court in Konya. The last dated events in the institutional history occurred in spring of 1198,²³⁹ yet Rāwandī held on to the miscellany until he had learned of Kai Ḥusrau's Armenian campaign in 1209. Moreover, in his autobiographical statement Rāwandī referred to Kai Ḥusrau's conquest of Antalya in 1207 twice, before and after the three parts of the miscellany.²⁴⁰ The seemingly contradictory cut-off dates give plausibility to the speculation about how Rāwandī suddenly, and therefore rather superficially, revised the *Rāḥat*. Unfortunately, the implicit assumptions of this speculation are problematic because they indicate the projection of twentieth-century criteria onto a thirteenth-century compilation. The various cut-off dates make the *Rāḥat* a poorly revised compilation, only if the various parts and chapters of a miscellany must cover the same time period. Aside from the

239. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: 396 lines 6-7 (Monday 21 Rabīʿ al-āḥir 594, i.e., 2 March 1198 CE), and 397 line 4 (Friday 20 Raḡab 594, i.e., 28 May 1198 CE). For the observation that the historical part concludes with Nūr al-Dīn Kukge's tenure as the governor of Hamadan and breaks off before Kukge's murder in 1203, see: Meisami, *Persian Historiography*: 256. The already observed difficulties with contemporary sources for the history of Hamadan might explain why the city's conquest by the Khwarazm Shahs is mentioned by neither Frye, "Hamadhān": 105; nor Adkā'i, "Hamadhān": 611; compare: Le Strange, *Lands*: 194.

240. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: 62 line 19, and 462 line 7. For this military event as *terminus ad quem* for the completion of the *Rāḥat*, see: Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: XX; Faḥrī. *Ḥusrev u Šīrīn*: 206; A.H. Morton in Swietochowski, *Illustrated Poetry*: 53; and Richard, *Splendeurs persans*: 42 s.v. 8.

practical problem of how to obtain information about contemporary politics in a period of violent transition, an author can stop reporting on current events whenever he pleases. The end of the institutional history conforms to Rāwandī's intention to include a history of the Great Seljuq sultanate, which ceased with the death of Ṭuḡril III and Kukḡe's tenure as the governor of Hamadan. Furthermore, this conclusion underlines Rāwandī's argument that the Seljuq interregnum in western Iran necessitated Kai Ḥusrau's intervention.

In the last section of his autobiographical statement, Rāwandī used the allusions to military events to relate the compilation of his miscellany to Seljuq politics: After the death of Ṭuḡril III in 1194 he dreamed of the ascendancy of a Seljuq sultan, after 1207 he heard about Kai Ḥusrau's conquest of Antalya and revised the *Rāḥat*, and after Kai Ḥusrau's Armenian campaign in 1209 he sent the completed miscellany to the Rum Seljuq court in Konya. Since Rāwandī systematically highlighted his personal knowledge of the Great Seljuq sultanate to present himself as an asset to his Rum Seljuq dedicatee and since there are so few contemporary sources for Great Seljuq politics, twentieth-century scholars accepted Rāwandī's self-representation, and considered his account of the reign of Ṭuḡril III and the conquest of the Khwarazm Shahs direct testimony for the Great Seljuqs' fall from power.²⁴¹ The importance of the last quarter of the *Rāḥat*'s

241. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: 331–405; the historical part itself begins on p.85 with a list of the Great Seljuq sultans. For the initial enthusiasm, see: Browne, "Account": "It [i.e., the *Rāḥat*] therefore deals at first-hand (for hardly anywhere does the author appear to have derived his information from books, but always from state archives or oral tradition) with 170 years of one of the most important periods of Persian history." (569). For the focus on the reigns on Arslān (ruled 1161–1176) and Ṭuḡril III, see: Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: XXI note 4; Cahen, "Historiography": 73; Hillenbrand, "Rāwandī": 460; and Meisami, *Persian Historiography*: 256. For a more reserved assessment, compare: Spuler, "Die historische und geographische Literatur": 113; and de Blois, "Saldjūkids": 971.

institutional history as historical evidence influences the interpretation of Rāwandī's statements about when he compiled the miscellany. A rule of thumb holds that more recent reports are more likely to be authentic and, conversely, less censured by its author's memory.²⁴² Although Rāwandī apparently aligned the beginning of the work on the compilation sometime in 1202 and 1203 with the end of the miscellany's institutional history, identifying thus an unambiguous starting point for his project, he did not provide a corresponding date for the work's completion. This evident lack of closure is puzzling, when one considers that holding on to a work does not necessarily mean that the text has not already been completed. While Rāwandī's references to the conquest of Antalya and the Armenian campaign are meaningful because he presented them as precedents for the pending relief of western Iran from the oppression through the Khwarazm Shahs, the precise recording of the date on which he stopped working on the miscellany does not strengthen his plea for patronage.

III. j. Nothing but the truth

The efforts to rescue at least part of the *Rāḥat* because of its status as unique evidence for the history of western Iran in the second half of the twelfth century form the background for the recent comments by Barbara Flemming and Morton on Rāwandī's plagiarism.²⁴³

242. For the approximate dating of the *Rāḥat*'s composition in 1202, see: Luther, "Islamic Rhetoric": 95. For the conjecture that the work was begun "in 599 [1202]" and "finally completed around 601/1204–5" and its combination with the observation that the historical part "breaks off around 595/1199", compare: Meisami, *Persian Historiography*: 238–239 and 256. Unfortunately, Meisami did not indicate where Rāwandī alluded or mentioned the *hiġra* years 601 and 595.

243. Faḥrī, *Husrev u Šīrīn*: "das persische Geschichts- und Unterhaltungswerk... dürfte mit seiner Masse dreister Plagiate aus der iranischen Dichtung nicht wenige zeitgenössische Dichter verärgert haben" (205–206); and A.H. Morton in Swietochowski, *Illustrated Poetry*: "his [i.e., Rāwandī's] undeniable tendency

Since none of the later authors who perused the *Rāḥat*'s institutional history for their Persian and Ottoman chronicles even mentioned Rāwandī, their denouncement is a bit ironic. In addition, neither Flemming nor Morton discussed the rules according to which Rāwandī accredited quotes and excerpts. Their stern judgment reflects the obvious contradiction between Rāwandī's sense of authorship and his citation practice. He stressed throughout the *Rāḥat* that this miscellany is the result of his own work and efforts, yet there does not seem to be a hard and fast rule according to which he identified, or conversely disregarded, the authors of his sources.²⁴⁴ For example, Rāwandī used the anecdote about the poet Ḥasan al-Ġaznawī to argue for the educational value of collecting and studying poems written by others, displaying a clear sense of employing texts from other men's reed pen for ulterior pedagogical purposes. But Rāwandī did not announce whenever he quoted lines from the *Šāhnāme* by Firdausī and *Husrau u-Šīrīn* by Nizāmī (died c.1209). For the critical edition of the *Rāḥat*'s unique manuscript, Iqbāl counted almost a thousand lines from various Persian epics, found around two-hundred-and-fifty lines in works by Nizāmī and identified more than six-hundred-and-seventy lines as *Šāhnāme* citations, tracing only around five-hundred-and-twenty lines to the *Šāhnāme*

toward plagiarism" (55; compare 54). Neither scholar comments on the irony that later authors used the *Rāḥat* without acknowledging Rāwandī's authorship, as discussed in the previous chapter. Nor do they address the underlying problem of how to identify plagiarism and originality within a literary tradition that adheres to a normative aesthetics. In recent research on Safavid literature the charge of plagiarism (*sariqa*) has been rejected with the help of theories of intertextuality and imitation: Losensky, *Welcoming Fighānī*: 101–114; and Quinn, *Historical Writing*: 28–29 and 141–143.

244. The issue is illustrated by the problem of deciding whether Rāwandī actually claimed to have invented every line he quoted, when he made statements such as: Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: "īn durr bisuftam u-īn aš'ār biguftam u-īn bīkr-i fikr biham āwardam" *I pierced this pearl, composed these poems, and assembled these virgin thoughts* (461).

editions available in the 1920s.²⁴⁵ These observations seem to indicate a clear distinction between poetry (*šīr*) and epic (*maṭnawī*) and raise at the same time the question of whether epics were still perceived as being connected to a communal Iranian literary heritage that abrogated claims to individual authorship.

The assumption that in early-thirteenth-century Iran the rules for using other people's literary works conformed to our current concept of intellectual property is a projection of modern western concepts onto a premodern, non-western literary tradition: the omission of a correct and complete attribution can be due to factors other than plagiarism. Naming the very famous as well as the totally obscure can sometimes seem unnecessarily pedantic. Even in the internet age not every written word is protected by copyright, so considerable amounts of information and literature are available within the public domain. Besides, the current state of research on Seljuq Iran does not allow for unequivocal conclusions about the texts that were circulating as shared literary traditions among the learned elites. Unfortunately, there is also insufficient evidence to argue that every line preserved outside the *Rāḥat* was correctly attributed in its other sources.²⁴⁶ An

245. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: XXII–XXVI. Iqbāl already stressed that because of its age the unique manuscript of the *Rāḥat* is an important witness for the transmission of the *Šāhnāme* (XXII). Moreover, Barbara Flemming relied on the *Rāḥat* manuscript as the oldest witness to the Ottoman version of Nizāmī's *Husrau u-Šīrīn*: Fāḥrī, *Husrev u Šīrīn*: 205.

246. As an illustration of the intricate problems, consider these two poems: Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: 33–37 (Ġamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Iṣfahānī) and 458–459 (Šaraf al-Dīn Šufurwe). Rāwandī identified Ġamāl al-Dīn (died 1192) as the author of a *zuhdīya*, yet a much longer version circulated under the title of “qaṣīda dar nikūhiš-i dunyā” (*Poem about the rejection of this world*): Ġamāl al-Dīn, *Dīwān*: 161–167. In contrast, the text of the stanzaic panegyric, which Rāwandī did not attribute to Šufurwe, is remarkably close to the other two versions, both of which were attributed to Šufurwe. For a detailed analysis of this poem, see: A.H. Morton in Swietochowski, *Illustrated Poetry*: 53–54 and 58–61. Finally, for the observation that both Ġamāl al-Dīn and Šufurwe were panegyrists in Isfahan, even working for the same patron, see: Browne, *Literary History*, 2: 540. Unfortunately, at the current state of research on manuscripts of Persian poetry, it is impossible to combine these minutiae for comprehensive arguments about authorship, circulation, and plagiarism.

already well-known personality stands much better chances to be considered the author of a text that various sources attributed to several authors.²⁴⁷ Accordingly, refuting the charge of Rāwandī's plagiarism represents a catch-22 because a rare work by an obscure author must appear a more unreliable source next to popular works by more renowned authors.

The charge of plagiarism, as well as the conclusion of a lack of talent, does not necessarily imply that an author did not care about unresolved discrepancies between various excerpts and quotes. The anecdote about Ṭuḡril Beg and his recognition by the Abbasid caliphate documents how Rāwandī approached functional data because he provided a very different report of Ṭuḡril Beg's first contacts with the Abbasid caliph al-Qā'im in the subsequent section on the institutional history of the Great Seljuq sultanate.²⁴⁸ Julie Scott Meisami suggested that Rāwandī cared more about the moral messages of the miscellany than the truthfulness of its contents and adhered to the concept of an »ethical-rhetorical« historiography while composing the *Rāḥat*.²⁴⁹ She

247. For this predicament, which is most closely associated with the *rubāʿ īyāt* attributed to the celebrated mathematician and astronomer ʿUmar Ḥaiyām (1048–1131), see: de Bruijn, *Persian Sufi Poetry*: 9–12. The greater part of his poetic corpus of very popular mystic poetry consists of so-called wandering quatrains that in various manuscripts are ascribed to multiple authors.

248. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: 65 line 14–66 line 1, and 102 line3–104 line 2.

249. It seems that Meisami herself invented the concept of an ethical-rhetorical historiography, about which she observed: "In particular, the concept of 'ethical-rhetorical' historiography, which is widely accepted in Western scholarship, has not yet penetrated our field, and I seem to be the only person to have made use of it." (Meisami, "History": 18). Without providing any specific page reference, Meisami mentioned a collection of essays on medieval historiography of the Latin West, yet only one of the contributors used the similar term "rhetorical historiography" (John O. Ward in Breisach, *Classical Rhetoric*: 103). Moreover, a concept of »ethical-rhetorical« historiography is not found, for example, in Spiegel, *The Past as Text*, introductions to medieval historiography, such as Schmale, *Funktion und Formen*, Ray, "Historiography, Western European," or Melville, "Historie." For Meisami's earlier remarks about ethical-rhetorical historiography, compare her article "The Past," in which she described "ethical history" (252), and her monograph about Persian historiography, in which she did not identify specific scholarship on medieval

concluded that medieval historians composed their works according to the rule of thumb:

“if it’s a good story, tell it, even though the ‘facts’ may go by the board.”²⁵⁰ Meisami

surrendered Rāwandī’s claim to reliability in order to argue that he used his rhetorical

historiography of the Latin West (*Persian Historiography*: 11). Because the adjective *rhetorical* identifies the language of historiographical works as a formal style the term »ethical-rhetorical« *historiography* is tautological. Historiography is a formal literary genre, and thus its medieval practitioners paid attention to the stylistic conventions of chancery and court for correct, even elegant, writing; compare: Schmale, *Funktion und Formen*: “Annalistik und Chronographie ... gehörten wie die übrige Historiographie zur Literatur in dem Sinne, daß sie unter bestimmten stilistischen Anforderungen standen. Sowohl die antiken rhetorischen Figuren wie die mittelalterlichen Gepflogenheiten der Reinprosa und des rhythmischen Satzschlusses, die Variatio, der mittlere und gehobene Stil, der zugleich mit der Verwendung literarischer Reminiszenzen vor allem in Form von Zitaten aus der Bibel und angesehener Autoren Assoziationen aufruft und das Einzelne ins Allgemeine hebt, kurz die *delectatio*, gehörten zu den Forderungen, denen auch der Historiograph genügen sollte und wollte.” (101); compare: Ray, “Historiography, Western European”: 260–261 and 265.

250. Meisami, “History”: 18. Meisami developed her concept of ethical-rhetorical historiography as a theoretical defense against efforts to analyze medieval Islamic historiography with literary-critical methods and literary theory, as suggested by her use of quotation marks for the terms *literary-critical methods* and *literary theory* in her article “History”: “but only recently have ‘literary-critical’ methods been applied to the study of Islamicate historiography, often by scholars whose primary concern is to separate ‘fact’ from ‘fiction.’” (16); and “It surprises me that, while writers on Islamicate historiography often invoke a rather heterogeneous selection of Western ‘literary theory,’ they seldom have recourse to studies on pre-modern Western historiography that might provide useful comparative insights.” (18). On the one hand, Meisami identified Stefan Leder’s recent article on the “Conventions of fictional narration in learned literature” as a failed effort to apply literary-critical methods to Arabic literature: Stefan Leder in Leder, *Story-Telling*: 34–60; and Meisami, “History”: 16–18. On the other hand, she hailed Marilyn Waldman’s study on Baihaqī’s history of the Ghaznavids as a model for how to analyze successfully Persian historiography: Waldman, *Toward a Theory*; and Meisami, “History”: 18. Unfortunately, the differences between the positions taken by Waldman, Leder and Meisami are much less clear-cut than Meisami’s judgments suggest. Both Leder and Meisami emphatically declared that they were not interested in extracting functional data from their written sources: Stefan Leder in Leder, *Story-Telling*: 35; and Meisami, *Persian Historiography*: 4 and 12; and Meisami, “History”: 16. Yet Leder and Waldman assumed that the fictional contents of texts is signaled by unambiguous, clear linguistic features: Stefan Leder in Leder, *Story-Telling*: 35. Moreover, Waldman herself had neither given up on functional data—like Leder and Meisami—nor was she abstaining from modern literary theory. On the contrary. Waldman relied on the literary-critical method of speech-act theory to distinguish between assertable and tellable types of information: Waldman *Toward a Theory*: 17–19; for additional arguments for the applicability of a speech-act approach to pre-Mongol Persian historiography, compare: Marilyn Robinson Waldman in Mitchell, *Narrative*: 245–248. Meisami in turn drew on Waldman’s speech-act distinction between assertable and tellable types of information to argue that medieval historians had a more generous concept of functional data: Meisami, “History”: 18.

skills to improve his reader's ethics by running slipshod over the facts.²⁵¹ Yet she did not explain how Rāwandī could contribute to his reader's moral education if his stories were not true.²⁵² In Islamic societies, history was an important ancillary in the curricula for legal and religious education.²⁵³ Moreover, the educational value of historical stories is bound, at least in some degree, to their historical truth.²⁵⁴ Meisami's silence about the relationship between truth and moral lessons is quite remarkable because she did not relinquish her notion that Rāwandī was a historian, and not an author of moralizing fiction. The juxtaposition of the *Rāḥat*'s two versions of Tuğril Beg's first contacts with the Abbasid caliphate allows qualifying Meisami's judgment of Rāwandī's approach to historical truth. In the autobiographical statement, Rāwandī introduced the anecdote with

251. For a convergent opinion on Rāwandī's focus on conveying moral lessons to his audience, see: Spuler, "Die historische und geographische Literatur": "Eine kurze, an neuen Tatsachen arme, aber für die Seldschuken Arslan and Toghryl (bis 1199) doch wichtige Darstellung der Seldschukengeschichte in iranischer Sprache ..., die durch schon ihren Titel *Rāḥat as-ṣudūr vā ājat as-surūr* schon darauf hinweist, dass sie vor allem der Unterhaltung, nicht der Belehrung dienen sollte. Aufs ganze gesehen ist das Buch freilich weniger witzig als vielmehr moralisierend, jedenfalls steht der Tatsachenbericht hinter den anderen Momenten durchaus zurück." (113).

252. For the same conclusion—indebted to remarks about "a different sense of fact" in medieval Islamic historiography by Hodgson, "Two Pre-Modern Muslim Historians": 62–63—compare: Robinson, *Historiography*: "Because the function of history was principally to exemplify the truths and teach lessons, it should come as no surprise that real license was taken in historical narration." (152). Robinson relies on contemporary narrative theory to argue that aesthetic devices are inseparable from any formal style, but he, like Meisami, does not explain how the conscious distortion of historical reality is compatible with the task of instructing the reader (153 note 12). For Robinson's heuristic dilemma, compare: Hayden White in Mitchell, *Narrative*: "The question is, Does ascribing to narrative a moralistic or moralizing function, rather than a primarily cognitive or aesthetic function yield any insight into *some* narrative practices" (251).

253. Rosenthal, *History*: 30–53.

254. For the Latin topos of *historia magistra vitae*, which was coined by Cicero (106–43 BCE), compare: Koselleck, *Vergangene Zukunft*: 40–46. In Latin rhetoric, *historiae* were the true stories from the past that provided the *rhetor* with rich material for his *narratio*. For the link between truth and *historiae* and its importance for historiography in the Latin West, see: Spiegel, *The Past as Text*: "the chronicler's obedience to the first law of history—which was, of course, the pursuit of truth (*prima lex historiae veritas est*)." (102); compare: Hans-Werner Goetz in Schmale, *Funktion und Formen*: 172–174. Today history is still on school curricula in East and West, for the very same reason.

“waqtī,”²⁵⁵ an unspecified expression of time, and without using either the terms *ḥabar* and *ta’rīḥ* or adding any concrete details beyond that which is necessary for the anecdote to work. This lack of specificity distinguishes the anecdote clearly from the later report in the section on Seljuq institutional history and indicates a conscious application of criteria for separating probable, possible stories about historical personalities from reports about historical events. The different degree of specificity in different sections of the *Rāḥat* thus supports the conclusion that the strategic use of unverifiable data about events that happened in the midst of the eleventh century is permissible for a concrete goal, such as obtaining the favor of a noble patron at the beginning of the thirteenth century. Conversely, material considered appropriate for the autobiographical statement was not included in the section on Seljuq institutional history, suggesting Rāwandī’s discriminating perception of the *Rāḥat*’s sundry sources.

III. k. Geography of knowledge

The juxtaposition of that which the available sources reveal about the lives of Rāḡib and Rāwandī shows two biographies that are strikingly similar despite the initial impression that Rāḡib hid behind his works, whereas Rāwandī liked talking about himself. Both men can only be seen through the lenses of biographical conventions, which in turn are determined through the respective literary genres. The men who appear in view are both models of scholarship and learning. At the time of composition both authors seemed to have worked outside an institutional framework or without a salaried position at a court,

255. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: 65.

because in their compilations they appealed to their target audiences without utilizing references to the status that either could convey.²⁵⁶

The differences in the treatment of biographical data in the *Muḥāḍarāt* and the *Rāḥat* reflect that, even though both men wrote for an audience, only Rāwandī conceived of his compilation as the means to another end. This observation matches the already discussed divergence in the circulation of the works' manuscripts and imprints within the *umma*. Rāḡib designed an Arabic textbook for the general reader, who considered the knowledge, perhaps even mastery, of literary Arabic an important skill for every Muslim, and not just a prerequisite for scholars and religious authorities.²⁵⁷ Reducing his own appearance as the author of the anthology to the absolute minimum while foregrounding its contents served this inclusive approach to his audience, because the Arabic language and literature, and not a desired relationship between author and audience, are at the center of Rāḡib's attention. In contrast, Rāwandī tried to attain noble protection and presented his own qualifications within the specific political, social, and theological parameters of a Turkish court with a Persian-Islamic culture. Rāwandī's self-promotion in the *Rāḥat* is reminiscent of contemporary letters of application, in which the strategic goal of gainful employment dictates the contents. Conversely, personal information that did not support his plea for patronage fell by the wayside, so that obvious contradictions are not solved and loose ends are left dangling. For example, how did a childless

256. For a list of salaried positions that allowed men to make a living as scholars in medieval Islamic societies, see: Makdisi, *Rise of Humanism*: 272–292. For the situation in western Europe between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries, compare: Burke, *Social History*: 32–52.

257. For the comparable role of Latin in the higher-education system of western Europe until the beginning of the twentieth century, see: Fuhrmann, *Bildungskanon*: 57–70; compare: Burke, *Social History*: 70.

bachelor obtain the *kunya* Abū Bakr, what was the full name of his father,²⁵⁸ and how is the *Rāḥat* related to his treatises on calligraphy and against the Rāfidites?²⁵⁹

The back-to-back analysis of the biographical data for Rāḡib and Rāwandī provides, despite the lack of concrete details, insight into the socioeconomic context of the dissemination of knowledge in western Iran before the Mongol conquest. Both men are associated with the major cities Isfahan and Hamadan, but the *Muḥāḍarāt* and the *Rāḥat* attest to the existence of different audiences for books in cities and at courts. On the one hand, the *Muḥāḍarāt* documents a vibrant intellectual life in west-Iranian cities in which textbooks compiled without a patron found readers who in turn kept these works in circulation.²⁶⁰ Although this intellectual life does not explain the economics of the circulation process beyond the systems of patronage and education, it directs attention to our ignorance about the modes of book manufacturing in medieval Islamic cities.²⁶¹ For example, did Rāḡib sell the compilation to a bookseller who then produced copies on demand, or did he himself peddle the anthology as a private tutor to his students? The list

258. The compilation contains the full names of his maternal grandfather Muḥammad b. ʿAlī b. Aḥmad al-Rāwandī, and his maternal uncles Abū al-Faḍl Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. ʿAlī al-Rāwandī and Zain al-Dīn Maḥmūd b. Muḥammad b. ʿAlī al-Rāwandī, yet the full name of his father is not mentioned at all. For the only reference to his father, see: Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: 39 lines 4-5.

259. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: 394 lines 20-24 (Rāfidites) and 445 line 15-18 (calligraphy).

260. Compare the circulation of medieval Latin anthologies: Rouse and Rouse, *Authentic Witnesses*: “Like the *Florilegium Angelicum*, the *Florilegium Gallicum* existed in more than one copy. It survives wholly or in part in at least twelve manuscripts. The number of unusual authors and texts represented in these two *florilegia* and the relatively large circulation that each enjoyed suggest that they were compiled in an area which was a crossroads: a place to which books were brought, at which they were copied, from which they were carried away.” (159).

261. Makdisi, *Rise of Humanism*: 262–271. For the commercialization of knowledge in western Europe between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries from the perspective of publishing and distribution, compare: Burke, *Social History*: 162–168.

of works accredited to him is dominated by books about ethics, scholastic philosophy, and Koran exegesis, associating him exclusively with religious learning. Perhaps, Rāḡib was a pen name, used by a bookseller to commission textbooks and reference books to be sold as the works of a certain Abū al-Qāsim al-Rāḡib. Since this Borgesian speculation pushes the envelope,²⁶² it becomes an interpretative exercise to illustrate the complete absence of contemporary, independent evidence for this author.²⁶³ On the other hand, the *Rāḡat* seems to indicate mobility between city and court as a realistic prospect, even though there is no indication that Kai Ḥusrau ever became Rāwandī's patron. His employment history is characterized by a close connection between calligraphy and religious learning, and suggests the absence of strict societal boundaries between academic tutoring jobs and craft jobs related to book manufacture. Still, Rāwandī limited himself in his autobiographical statement to apprenticeships and employment by patrons and did not discuss how he actually supported himself after the death of Ṭuḡril III.

Manufacturing books without patronage testifies to the spread of literacy past the gatekeepers of power and knowledge, yet the question of who could read and write which languages in western Iran between the late tenth and the early thirteenth century cannot be determined. The language choices of Rāḡib and Rāwandī only document that the

262. Borges, *Labyrinths*: "In literary practices the idea of a single subject is also all-powerful. ... The critics often invent authors: they select two dissimilar works—the *Tao Te Ching* and the *1001 Nights*, say—attribute them to the same writer and then determine most scrupulously the psychology of this interesting *homme de lettres* ..." (13); and "if the characters of a fictional work can be readers or spectators, we, its readers or spectators, can be fictitious." (196).

263. To my knowledge, perplexity about this fact was only voiced by Kilpatrick, "al-Rāḡhib al-Iṣfahānī": "Exceptionally for a writer of considerable importance, al-Rāḡhib is ignored by biographical dictionaries." (644).

intellectual and learned circles in cities and at courts accommodated more than one language and were conversant with various literary traditions. Since the later dominance of literary Persian obliterated how different languages coexisted in western Iran between the seventh and fourteenth centuries, the *Muḥāḍarāt* and the *Rāḥat* are important evidence for the context in which Persian established itself as the dominant Iranian literary language. The continued popularity of the *Muḥāḍarāt* indicates that the prestige derived from the knowledge of literary Arabic was not weakened by the growing spread of literary Persian. Rāwandī stressed his Arabic language training as well as his knowledge of both Arabic and Persian poetry. The main language of the *Rāḥat* is Persian, but Rāwandī did not explicitly identify the rule according to which he sometimes accompanied his Arabic insertions, be it poetry, proverbs, or *ḥadīṯ*, with Persian translations.²⁶⁴ An unquestioned familiarity with other Iranian languages or dialects is suggested by the few lines of a still unidentified *fahlawīya*, which Rāwandī quoted without any further comment or translation in his autobiographical statement.

While the authors' language choices followed from their decisions about literary genres and literate audiences, the languages are nevertheless irrelevant for the identification of their authors as Sunnite or Shi'ite in order to fit them into nationalist interpretations of Arab, Iranian, or Turkish history. In the *Muḥāḍarāt*, Rāḡib assiduously avoided any dogmatic commitment. In contrast, Rāwandī situated the *Rāḥat* within a Hanafite framework based on the authorities of both Abū Ḥanīfa and Abū 'Abd Allāh

264. For Iqbāl's identification of the two-hundred-and sixty-four Arabic proverbs and one-hundred-and-twenty-two lines of Arabic poetry, see: Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: XXII. Iqbāl, however, did not tabulate *ḥadīṯ* or Koran citations.

Muḥammad b. Idrīs al-Šāfi‘ī (767–820).²⁶⁵ In contemporary scholarship, Rāḡib is imagined as either a Sunnite scholar or a Shi‘ite authority who happened to write in Arabic, while Rāwandī is not perceived as either Arab, Iranian, or Turkish, but is acknowledged as such an important historian of early Turkish history that, in the 1950s, Ahmet Ateş (1917–1966) translated the *Rāḡat* into Republican Turkish.²⁶⁶ It is easier to nationalize an obscure theologian and philosopher, to whom popular textbooks and treatises in Arabic are ascribed, than an outspoken Ḥanafite calligrapher who lived in western Iran and dedicated a Persian miscellany to a Turkish sultan in Anatolia.

265. For the panegyrics of Abū Ḥanīfa and Šāfi‘ī, see: Rāwandī, *Rāḡat*: 13 line 6–19 line 1.

266. Storey-Bregel 2: 749 s.v. 641 [336].

IV Contents of textbooks: The spoken and the written word

Like most of his contemporaries, John Colet (1467–1519) did not read for pleasure, but for edification, which could be transmitted to others.

J.B. Trapp, “The Humanist Book”

“*What* book?” I asked.

“Any old book,” he said. “I just used it. I didn’t stop to read it.”

John Irving, *The 158-Pound Marriage*

The *Muḥāḍarāt* and the *Rāḥat* are composed of excerpts taken from sources endowed with authority and prestige, or even canonical status, so that the arrangement of their contents is the most original aspect of these textbooks. I am in the fortunate position that research by Malti-Douglas and Thomas has already explored the organization of Arabic anthologies on the micro-levels of syntax and semantics.¹ Malti-Douglas juxtaposed the *Kitāb al-buḥālā’* (Book of Misers) by ‘Amr b. Baḥr al-Ġāḥiẓ (c.776–869) and *al-Buḥālā’* (Misers) by al-Ḥaṭīb al-Baġdādī (died 1071). She conducted her research in the late 1970s, and her study shows the influences of both structuralism and social history.² She observed that, within chapters or sections, the juxtaposition of the good and evil aspects of a topic (*al-maḥāsīn wa-l-masāwī*) is the most common orientation device for the

1. Malti-Douglas, *Structures*; and Thomas, “Concept of *Muḥāḍara*.”

2. Malti-Douglas, *Structures*: “Since the subject of a monograph is not defined by its neighbors, or anchored in an encyclopedic schema, its cultural position, the orientation of its subjects, must be expressed through the text and the organization of the monograph itself.” (15). The analysis, however, is always based on written evidence so that in both cases—anthologies with single topic or multiple topics—the written text will provide the evidence for any interpretation of its societal relevance. For a rejection of Malti-Douglas’s approach, compare: Thomas, “Concept of *Muḥāḍara*”: “a contents-based approach cannot but lead to generalization, ... It is not enough (nor particularly productive) to know what is in an adab anthology; ... an approach that focuses on form to the detriment of contents tends to give too much weight to signs of ‘logical’ and ‘systematic’ arrangement ... Clearly, what we need is a methodology that takes into account both the contents and the form of the adab anthology, and that emphasizes its organizing principles.” (19–20). Although the concurrent analysis of form, contents, and criteria of organization is presented as the answer to the question of what an Arabic anthology is, the actual contents of an anthology is judged to be of little heuristic value.

arrangement of the multitude of excerpts in an anthology. She suggested that this antithetical binary constitutes in fact a mental structure of a medieval Arab-Islamic mind-set because *al-maḥāsin wa-l-masāwī* permeated medieval Arab-Islamic civilization as an organizational principle.³ In the late 1990s, Thomas settled for Rāḡib's *Muḥāḍarāt*, selected its section on rhetoric (*balāḡa*) for her close reading,⁴ and compared Rāḡib's anthology with Ibn Qutaiba's *ʿUyūn al-aḥbār*. Although Thomas was not fully convinced by Malti-Douglas's analysis,⁵ she followed her interpretation of *al-maḥāsin wa-l-masāwī* as an antithetical orientation device reflecting a societal attitude toward knowledge.⁶ A

3. Malti-Douglas, *Structures*: "This principle effectively functions as a mental structure in Medieval Islam, one whose importance is so great that it can be found as an immanent structure in many monographic *adab* works, and throughout *adab* literature. It is here, however, being considered essentially an organizational principle" (15). She cited in support, though without any specific page references, Ibrahim Geris, *Un Genre littéraire arabe: Al-Maḥāsin wa-l-masāwī* (Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 1977).

4. Rāḡib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ed. Beirut, 1: 58–68; this section (*faṣl*) is in the first chapter (*ḥadd*) of the anthology.

5. Thomas, "Concept of *Muḥāḍara*": "In the analysis proper—considerably less accessible than her introductory observations—Malti-Douglas analyzes the morphology of individual anecdotes according to Propriarian functions of action and role ... Malti-Douglas has also observed that scholars tend to focus on contents without considering form, or vice versa. Her proofs for this observation, however, are less clear." (18–19).

6. Thomas, "Concept of *Muḥāḍara*": "Pairing contrasting (or opposite) nouns ... —what Malti-Douglas calls the "*al-maḥāsin wa-l-masāwī*" orientation—is a typical *adab* organizing advice and more than just an orientation. ... a textual manifestation of social expediency—a literary model that reflects society's opinions, and probably human psychology (Malti-Douglas's 'mental structure')." (176). It is only consequent that in her own analysis of the *Muḥāḍarāt* this organizational principle is consistently highlighted: 171–208.

For Rāḡib's reliance on binaries in the *Muḥāḍarat*, compare: Sadan, "Admirable and Ridiculous Hero": "the road to eclectic *adab* is often constructed by combining various and contradictory elements" (485); Leder and Kilpatrick, "Classical Arabic Prose": "It [i.e., a compilation] may be arranged dialectically, as is the case ... in a few entire works like Rāḡhib al-Iṣbahānī's *Muḥāḍarāt al-udabā'*, with its marked preference for antithesis." (17); and Kilpatrick, "al-Rāḡhib al-Iṣfahānī": "One of the main *adab* anthologies, it challenges the reader intellectually by its stress on antithesis," (645).

For an exploration of the comparable binary *al-ḡidd wa-l-hazl* (earnest and jest) as a literary topos that is built on an "oppositional expression," see: Gelder, "Mixtures of Jest and Earnest."

For an anthropological take on this binary, compare: Bonebakker, "*Adab*": "good and evil, the harmful and useful, the pleasant and unpleasant. These are essential to the human condition; man is expected to be aware of such opposite forces to make life meaningful." (28).

link between the arrangement of the contents and a medieval Arab-Islamic mentality would strengthen the sociolinguistic framework on which she relied for her analysis of the *Muḥāḍarāt*.⁷

Malti-Douglas and Thomas concentrated on the interdependency of structure and meaning because both selected compilations that within the field of Arabic studies were classified as belles-lettres, and not as textbooks. While readers were likely to profit from these works, their entertainment was assumed to be their authors' main concern: *prodesse et delectare*. But if comprehensive compilations are approached as entertaining literature, their respective episteme does not even come into view, because their whole contents are labeled fiction. The studies by Malti-Douglas and Thomas reveal the impressive control with which medieval Islamic scholars handled their excerpts, composing tightly argued texts on the micro-level of comprehensive compilations. Yet their close attention to syntax and semantics on the micro-level does not elucidate how multitudes of excerpts were transformed into cohesive works. In contrast, my examination of how the contents are arranged in the *Muḥāḍarāt* and the *Rāḥat* privileges the macro-level of included topics (*res*) and covered disciplines (*artes*). The arrangement of the contents of the macro-level indicates that both compilations are single-subject encyclopedias designed to address an educational goal: an anthology of literary Arabic and a miscellany of texts about the Great Seljuq sultanate. The conscious limitation of the contents, however, is less patent in the *Muḥāḍarāt*, inasmuch as Rāḡib covered many topics, focusing on the interactions between men, though also touching on religious issues and the natural environment.

7. Despite her close attention to semantics, Thomas did not explore the degree to which the micro-level organization of the excerpts reflects Rāḡib's experiences with Arabic lexicography. As repeatedly mentioned, Rāḡib is also credited with the compilation of a very popular Koranic dictionary, the *Mufradāt*.

IV. a. How to arrange the contents: Parataxis

At first glance, the arrangement of the contents seems disorientating in both compilations.⁸ This impression reflects that parts, chapters, or sections are presented in a non-alphabetical paratactic order so that parts and chapters seem to enjoy the same status and appear to be of equal importance.⁹ Since the order of parts, chapters, or sections is not immediately identifiable, the arrangement of the contents appears as the very opposite of a well-structured sequence of subject matters, topics, or disciplines.¹⁰ The following tables give the divisions of the *Muḥāḍarāt* and the *Rāḥat*. The *Muḥāḍarāt* table is drawn on Rāḡib's survey of his work in the introduction, because the extent to which extent chapter and section headings were modified within the text during the transmission

8. With regard to medieval compilations of Arabic prose, this feeling was recently expressed by Leder and Kilpatrick, "Classical Arabic Prose": "At one end of the scale are books in which the author brings together at random passages on all kinds of subjects which he considers worth recording; ... Books which preserve the form of their <sic> dictation session (*Amālī*) or record scholarly discussions (*Majālis*) may also lack an overall thematic organisation;" (17).

9. Meier, "Grundzüge": "Das Prinzip der Zusammenstellung der Hauptteile wie auch deren Unterabteilungen ... ist das der parataktischen, offenen Reihung. Die Teile in sich haben weitgehend den Charakter von Stoffsammlungen. Grundlage der in der Regel nicht völlig ungeordneten Reihenbildung ist nicht ein hierarchisches System, keine systematische Folge, sondern oft eine Rangfolge innerhalb der Gruppen der behandelten Gegenstände." (481).

10. The *Kitāb al-aḡānī* (Book of Songs) by Abū al-Faraḡ al-Iṣfahānī (897–967 or 972) is another example of the observation that organizing the contents of a compilation in a non-alphabetical paratactic order was the rule, and not the exception, although the resulting arrangement, especially in an anthology as immense as the *Kitāb al-aḡānī*, might appear to lack in structure; see the "List of contents of the *Kitāb al-aḡānī*" in Kilpatrick, *Making the Great Book of Songs*: 291–320. This is the only comprehensive survey of the contents in Kilpatrick's study of the anthology. For her exploration of how the collected songs can be divided into three distinct groups, forming three parts that apparently are not set off from each other in the sources used for this study, see: 258–277, and compare 28–29. Although Abū al-Faraḡ did not complete the *Kitāb al-aḡānī*, Kilpatrick did not discuss the organization of the contents vis-à-vis the textual problems related to the transmission of an unfinished anthology: 30–33. There is, however, an aside, suggesting that medieval Islamic scholars had a different understanding of how the *Kitāb al-aḡānī* is organized: "The structural significance of the introductory songs was ignored by the medieval abridgers." (406 note 1).

process is unknown.¹¹ The arrangement of the contents is based on the division into twenty-five chapters of varying length. In contrast, the *Rāḥat* table is compiled from the overlined headings of the various components in the unique manuscript, as preserved by Iqbāl in the critical edition.¹² Not all of the headings are literal translations, and many are abbreviated.

11. Rāḡib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ed. Beirut, 1: 8–11.

For an analysis of the chapter headings that focused on the syntax and semantics of the individual headings, see: Thomas, “Concept of *Muḥāḍara*”: 171–176 and 223–224; compare the very succinct remarks on the chapter sequence by Rosenthal, *Knowledge Triumphant*: 271–272.

12. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: 1, 5, 8, 19, 38, 58, 63, 68, 85, 86, 97, 116, 125, 138, 152, 167, 203, 208, 224, 249, 258, 274, 281, 331, 375, 405, 416, 428, 431, 437, 447, 457, and 459.

Table 10. The numbered chapter headings (*ḥudūd*)
as given in the introduction of the *Muḥāḍarāt*.

< **Introduction** >

- 1 Reason, knowledge, ignorance & that which pertains to them
- 2 Rule & those who hold it and its subjects
- 3 Justice & injustice; Clemency, forgiveness & punishment; Hostility & envy; and Humility & pride
- 4 Support & morals; Fun & shyness; Loyalty & betrayal; and High rank & depravity
- 5 Paternity, filiation & their praise and censure; and Kin
- 6 Gratitude & praise; Censure & slander; and Invocations, congratulations & gifts
- 7 Ambitions, good fortune & hopes
- 8 Trades, profits & fickleness; and Wealth & poverty
- 9 Gift-giving & begging
- 10 Foods, having a meal, reception of guests & descriptions of foods
- 11 Drinking, beverage & their circumstances and utensils
- 12 Brotherhoods
- 13 Love & things pertaining to it
- 14 Courage & that which pertains to it
- 15 Marriage, wives & divorce; and Chastity & cuckoldry
- 16 Risqué jokes & ribaldry
- 17 Inborn disposition of people & their reputations
- 18 Clothes & bedding
- 19 Censure of this world & revelation of vicissitudes
- 20 Religious denominations & religious observances
- 21 Death & its circumstances
- 22 Heavens & seasons; Places & waters; and Trees & fires
- 23 Angels & spirits
- 24 Animals
- 25 Miscellaneous specialities

< **Colophon** >

Table 11. Headings of the *Rāḥat*, most are marked by overlining and larger script in the text.

basma

Panegyric of Muḥammad

Panegyric of the Prophet's companions, their successors and the religious authorities

Honorifics of the Seljuq sultans

The author and the praise of his friends and teachers

The writing of the book

The contents and its classification

Justice

List of the names of the Seljuq sultans

The beginning of the Seljuq sultanate

Ṭuḡril I

Alb Arslān

Malik Šāh I

Barkiyāruq

Muḥammad I

Sanḡar

Mahmūd II

Ṭuḡril II

Mas'ūd

Malik Šāh III

Muḥammad II

Sulaimān

Arslān

Ṭuḡril III

The conquest of the Khwarazm Shahs

faṣl : Boon companions and board games

faṣl : Wine

faṣl : Horse racing and archery

faṣl : Hunting

faṣl : Calligraphy

faṣl : Numerical divination

ḥātimat-i kitāb

The dream

< **Colophon** >

Although a seemingly trivial observation, it is significant that Rāḡib and Rāwandī did not arrange the contents of their compilations in an alphabetical order.¹³ Systems of alphabetical order had already emerged with the rise of Arabic lexicography in the eighth century and were a well-established aspect of book learning between the eleventh and twelfth centuries.¹⁴ Parataxis is a form of montage that does not stipulate any hierarchy among the components of a compilation, yet it does not defy coherence and meaning because it presents all components within one linear sequence.¹⁵ The paratactic order in the *Muḥāḍarāt* and the *Rāḡat* explains why the organization of their contents can appear as both open and descending.¹⁶ The experience of openness follows from the observation that within a paratactic order neither augmentation nor abridgment changes the equal

13. For a negative spin on alphabetical order because of its paratactic equanimity toward contents and hierarchy, compare: Burke, *Social History*: “Alphabetical order had been known in the Middle Ages. What was new in the seventeenth century was that this method of ordering knowledge was becoming the primary rather than a subordinate system of classification. Today the system may seem obvious, even ‘natural’, but it appears to have been adopted, originally at least, out of a sense of defeat by the forces of intellectual entropy at a time when new knowledge was coming into the system too fast to be digested or methodized.” (110); and “the use of alphabetical order both reflected and encouraged a shift from a hierarchical and organic view of the world to one which was individualistic and egalitarian.” (115).

14. For a concise description of the three systems of alphabetical order (the anagrammatical arrangements based on phonetic principles, rhyme order, and the so-called Kufan order) that were used in Arabic lexicography, see: Haywood, “Kāmūs”: 524.

15. For the difficulties of perceiving paratactic structures as coherent, see, for example, the thesis of the absence of narrative in pre-Islamic Arabic poetry because of its paratactic organization, as argued, for example, by Sperl and Shackle, “Introduction”: 4. For a discussion of parataxis as a technical device to generate meaning, compare: Eisner, *Comics*: 122–138.

16. Malti-Douglas, *Structures*: “The subjects run in generally declining importance (in the value system of society) from the beginning to the end of the work. Hence, there is a syntax of position; the book of women is the last of the ten. But the chapters have been arranged according to syntagmatic considerations as well. The chapter on “Bad Breath” (*an-Nakha*) follows the chapter on “Vomit” (*al-Qay*), while the chapter on “Foul Breath and Stench” (*al-Bakhar wan-Natn*) follows the chapter on “Noses” (*al-Unūf*).” (14), and “The second major point is that insofar as the ordering of materials is a semiotic principle (generally linear), it apparently always descends in value from the beginning to the end. Thus, in subject arrangements, the more important subjects precede the lesser ones.” (16). For qualified agreement with regard to the descending order, compare: Fanjul, Review of *Structures*: 130–131.

ranking of the components of a work. But revised versions in which the linear sequence of the components is either shortened or lengthened need to be distinguished from revisions that rearrange the components within a new sequence. Moreover, complete manuscript copies of compilations document that they are always framed by an introduction and a colophon. Even though a colophon is not an epilogue, and therefore not designed to counterbalance an introduction, the colophon sets an endpoint to a linear sequence of parts and chapters, effectively underlining that a work, or one of its parts, has been concluded and will not be continued.¹⁷ Colophons are often deleted from twentieth-century imprints so that a linear sequence of parts and chapters, which in a manuscript would have been terminated with a colophon, just suddenly stops.¹⁸ The tendency to perceive a linear sequence as a descending order ignores that the meaning of a linear sequence changes when its last component is changed. The *Muḥāḍarāt* begins with a chapter about reason and knowledge.¹⁹ In its unabridged version, the anthology ends with a chapter about miscellanea, suggesting a movement from the important topics to the less relevant ones because the last chapter serves as a catchall for that which would otherwise fall through the cracks of its classification system.²⁰ The 1902 abridgment, however, ends with a chapter about love, making it now possible to interpret the linear sequence of the chapters, though in an admittedly anachronistic, romantic fashion, as the movement from

17. For function and form of the colophon in Islamic manuscripts, see: Déroche, *Manuel*: 337–338.

18. For the deleted colophon in twentieth-century imprints, compare these three editions: Rāḡib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ed. Zaidān: 302; Rāḡib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ed. Beirut, 4: 724; and Rāḡib, *Nawādir*: 434.

19. Rāḡib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ed. Beirut, 1: 13–155.

20. Rāḡib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ed. Beirut, 4: 700–724.

reason to emotion.²¹ The same effect can be observed with regard to the reception of the *Rāḥat*. The status of Rāwandī's miscellany as a principal source of Great Seljuq politics is strengthened if the part on the institutional history of the Great Seljuq sultanate, which happens to be significantly longer than the accompanying parts on justice and courtly education,²² is considered in isolation.²³ Conversely, the *Rāḥat*'s institutional history loses its status as independent historiography written for the sake of history if the miscellany's parts, sections, and chapters are seen together as an integrated whole. The linear sequence of components appears then as a progression from the propaedeutic debate on justice to the concluding chapter about numerical divination.²⁴

The problems posed to modern users by the paratactic order of comprehensive compilations are further compounded by the organization and design of Islamic manuscripts. One of the most puzzling aspects of Islamic manuscripts, at least from the perspective of western scholars,²⁵ is that extant numbering systems were not utilized for

21. Rāḡib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ed. Zaidān: 262–302.

22. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: 68–84 (debate on justice), 85–405 (institutional history) and 405–457 (six chapters about courtly education).

23. Browne, "Account": "it includes at the end... sundry rather irrelevant, but interesting sections on the Courtier's Accomplishments" (569); Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: "the beauty of the book is to a great extent marred by a large amount of extraneous matter" (XXII), and "The contents of the sundry sections at the end of the book are to my mind not so important as might appear at first sight." (XXVI); and Meisami, *Persian Historiography*: "The non-historical chapters of the *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr* are beyond the scope of this discussion." (254).

24. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: 68–84 (debate on justice) and 447–457 (numerical divination).

25. Goody, *East*: "De Ste Croix demonstrated that the Greeks and Romans did not develop double-entry bookkeeping despite the wide range of their trades and empires. In discussing the implications of this absence, Macve asks what they missed as a result. ... As de Ste Croix remarked, and as is well worth remembering in the Weberian debate, 'we must not belittle the intelligence of the Greeks and Romans because they did not try to do what the nature of their economic system made it unnecessary for them to attempt.'" (61). The quotation is taken from G. de Ste Croix, "Greek and Roman Accounting," in *Studies in*

the invention of analytical finding-devices, especially indices and concordances.²⁶ Even chapter or section numbers, when they were used, as in the *Muḥāḍarāt*, to mark and hence secure the sequence of the components of a work, were often written out instead of being abbreviated with numerals. But close examination of Islamic manuscripts reveals the means employed to facilitate the reader's orientation: division of texts into chapters, sections, or paragraphs; keywords on the margins; and illumination, such as rubrication, overlining, differently sized scripts, and systems of separators.²⁷ Because research on Islamic manuscripts in general, and anthologies and miscellanies in particular, is still in its very early stages, it is impossible to elucidate both the coexistence of various reading practices and the uses of literacy through a comprehensive interpretation of the cooperation between the visual organization of the page layout and the order of a

the History of Accounting, ed. A.C. Littleton and B.S. Yamey (London 1956): 34.

26. Déroche, *Manuel*: 97–109 (foliation) and 337 (table of contents). For the importance of Arabic numerals for the invention of Latin research tools in thirteenth-century Europe, compare: Rouse and Rouse, *Authentic Witnesses*: 242–244.

In the already mentioned recent study of the *Kitāb al-aġānī*, indices, be they appendices or independently published, are discussed only as an occasional feature of its nineteenth- and twentieth-century imprints, and there is no comment on the absence of indices in its manuscripts and imprint; see: Kilpatrick, *Making the Great Book of Songs*: 2–5, compare 434–435 for the absence of the terms *index*, *orientation device*, or *table of contents* in her “Index of Subjects and Terms.” This inconsistent approach to orientation devices follows from Kilpatrick's focus on how Abū al-Faraġ compiled the *Kitāb al-aġānī*. For her the organization of an anthology is not directly related to practical concerns of how readers will use the tremendous collection of poems and accompanying commentaries.

27. For strategies of information retrieval provided by the text of the *Ṣubḥ al-aʿšā fī ʿīnā at al-inšāʾ* (Dawn for the Night-Blind Concerning the Craft of Composition), the mammoth administrative handbook by the Mamluk scholar Aḥmad al-Qalqaṣandī (1355–1418), compare: Maaïke van Berkel in Binkley, *Pre-Modern Encyclopaedic Texts*: 159–168. Van Berkel relied on the twentieth-century edition by Muḥammad Ḥusain Šams al-Dīn and did not discuss the question of analytical finding-devices, although she summarized the visual means of page layout in two fifteenth-century manuscripts: 167 and note 21.

manuscript's contents.²⁸

Research on the history of the book and the history of reading in Europe has shown that various reading practices emerged in accordance with the changes in how a society provided its members access to literacy and books.²⁹ While intensive and extensive reading represent the two extremes of a range of reading styles that answer the question of *how* to read *which reading matter*, reading styles must be distinguished from the multitude of reading objectives that answer the question of *why* to read *which reading matter*. Different reading practices are reflected in both the editing of texts and the developments of book design. Before the introduction of the printing press in the fifteenth century, books were rare and few people could read. Consequently, until the eighteenth century the few who could read rarely had well-equipped libraries at their disposal and the repeated study of a small selection of books was a common phenomenon. But already in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the efforts of the Western Church to reign in heterodoxy and heresy created a demand for teaching tools to educate scholar-preachers about how to organize their sermons and to instruct the laity. In the twelfth century, the layout of Latin manuscripts was adapted to accommodate the efficient locating of sentences on the page.³⁰ This development prepared the compilation

28. I am not aware of any research that explores the interdependency between the design of Islamic manuscripts and memory training, comparable to recent research on Latin manuscripts, such as Carruthers, *Book of Memory*. The role of reading and writing vis-à-vis the authority of orally transmitted knowledge within the context of legal education in nineteenth-century Yemen is examined by Messick, *Calligraphic State*: 75–92.

29. Burke, *Social History*: 177–196.

30. Parkes, “Influence”: “By the mid twelfth century scholasticism had developed new techniques for the handling of the *auctoritates*, which were employed in texts like the *Quatuor libri sententiarum* of Peter Lombard and the *Concordia discordantium canonum* of Gratian. To think became a craft. The application

of indices and concordances as independent reference works and research tools in the thirteenth century.³¹ Both page layout and analytical finding-devices indicate the emergence of a new approach to the authority of the written word because consultation literacy provided access to the written heritage without stipulating the study of the complete canon.³²

**IV. b. How to inform the reader about the contents:
The introduction's *ordinatio***

How the reader was informed about the contents of a manuscript provides important clues about reading styles.³³ Until the eighteenth century Islamic manuscripts usually contained a survey of contents without page numbers, which, as the conclusion of the introduction, directly preceded the first chapter. Such a survey resembles the *materia operis* that was

of scholastic method demanded closer scrutiny of the arguments, and the reorganization of the material according to topics produced the need for more ostensible guides to the new organization to facilitate reference.” (117).

31. Parkes, “Influence”: “The turning-point in the history of the presentation of a text for the academic reader came in the thirteenth century when the rediscovered Aristotelian logic and the consequent interest in more rigorous philosophical procedures entailed the adoption of principles which demanded a more precise method of dissecting and defining human knowledge. ... The change from the early twelfth-century attitude is reflected in general discussions about the structure of knowledge and the subordination of the sciences to the study of theology,” (119).

32. Rouse and Rouse, *Authentic Witnesses*: 191–219 (page layout in the twelfth century) and 221–255 (research tools in the thirteenth century). For the observation that in later medieval England even scribes without clerical education regularly added finding-devices to books that were not already equipped with them, see: George R. Keiser in Hellinga and Trapp, *History of the Book*: 475–476.

33. Parkes, “Influence”: “With the recognition of the principle that different kinds of *ordo* were appropriate in different kinds of study, the organization of an individual work came under closer scrutiny. For the first time scholars formulated a definition which included the disposition of material within a text into books and chapters.” (120); and “Academic discussion bent on more precise definition focused on the ostensible arrangement of a work and formulated the concept of *ordinatio*, thus providing a theoretical foundation for attempts to meet the readers’ practical needs.” (121).

commonly added as a new feature to Latin reference works by the second half of the twelfth century and preceded the original beginning of these works.³⁴ Yet it does not resemble the tables of contents in modern western imprints. In Arabic manuscripts, the survey is a solid text-block, organized by functional illumination in accordance with the scribe's concept of the uses of the book and the available financial resources. On the one hand, the survey constituted an integral part of the introduction, and was not designed as a list or table.³⁵ On the other hand, the absence of a continuous numbering system for folios or pages made it impossible to add precise folio or page references to the survey in the introduction. Since the survey indicates neither the exact place of a chapter within the manuscript nor its approximate length, the reader cannot move in one single step from the survey in the introduction to an immediately identifiable page or folio within the manuscript. The efficiency of information retrieval in Islamic manuscripts depends instead on the individual reader's ability to understand the textual divisions, page layout, and illumination, and to utilize their clues while scanning the text. The survey of contents in the introduction serves the purpose of informing the reader about the scope

34. Parkes, "Influence": "Also by the second half of the twelfth century the work was preceded by a *materia operis* which acted as a kind of synoptic introduction and which indicated the topics dealt with in each section." (119). The position of the *materia operis* is deduced from Parkes's remarks on p.199 note 2.

35. I am not aware of any research on the emergence of distinct conventions for the description of the contents in Arabic, Persian, and Ottoman manuscripts. Manuscript evidence, however, suggests that the solid block-text is typical for Arabic manuscripts, while table of contents developed as a characteristic feature of Persian manuscripts. For reproductions of tables of contents in thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Persian manuscripts, see: Swietochowski, *Illustrated Poetry*: 10 fig.2 (*Mu'nis al-aḥrār*); and Richard, *Splendeurs persans*: 40 s.v.6 (*Šaraf al-nabī*). For a thirteen-century miscellany of thirty-eight Persian works, each of which has its own table of contents, see: Leiden, University Library – Legatum Warnerianum, MS pers. Cod. 286 Warn. Unfortunately, the manuscript is incomplete and thus undated and unplaced; for a codicological description and a list of its thirty-eight works, compare: de Goeje and de Jong, *Catalogus codicum orientalium*: 207–218 s.v. MDCCCCLV.

and organization of a work without being designed as an analytical orientation device.³⁶

When a reader consulted a manuscript for reference purposes, he scanned the text in one direction, from the introduction to a particular place.³⁷ Today we use this reading style when we are running through rolls of microfilms searching for specific data. The long film strip, while being moved past the projector's lens, does not allow for taking shortcuts, and complicates jumping back and forth.

In the introduction of the *Muḥāḍarāt*, Rāḡib described how he organized his diverse excerpts in a user-friendly fashion:

Regarding that which I adduce for every rubric I strove for utmost brevity and concision, and deleted from it repetition and prattle, lest handling and studying it be loathsome. But the enormous size of this book is in part the enormous size of the large quantity of its sections and of the precision of its details. I arranged this book into chapters (*ḥudūd*), sections (*fuṣūl*), and rubrics (*abwāb*), and stated all chapters and sections at the beginning of the book so that it will be easy to find every meaning at its place. I listed every wisecrack under the rubric, which is the most appropriate for it, although much thereof is properly used in [various] places.³⁸

36. The juxtaposition of one-way scanning and analytical finding-devices does not imply a lack of rationality among Muslim scholars; compare Goody, *East*: “there is a developing internal ‘logic’ or ‘rationality’ about these processes [i.e., the invention of various forms of bookkeeping] rather than an external injection of ‘science’ or of mentality.” (81).

37. For the claim that medieval encyclopedias were usually read cover to cover, and not just consulted as reference works, see: Burke, *Social History*: 186. For a sociolinguistic analysis that silently assumes that Rāḡib compiled the *Muḥāḍarāt* as a reference work, to be consulted like a modern thesaurus for the solutions of communication problems, see: Thomas, “Concept of *Muḥāḍara*”: 168–208. Her analysis is exclusively based on the text of the Beirut edition so that Thomas discusses neither the layout of manuscript pages nor the absence of analytical finding-devices.

38. Rāḡib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ed. Beirut: “wa-qad taḥarraitu fī-mā aḥraḡtu-hū min kulli bābin ḡāyata al-iḥtiṣār wa-l-iḡtiṣār wa-aʿfaiṭu-hū min al-iḡtār wa-l-iḡdār li-allā tuʿāfa mumārasatu-hū wa-mudārasatu-hū lākinna ʿiẓm ḥādā al-kitāb baʿḍ al-ʿiẓm li-kaṭrat fuṣūli-hī wa-taḥqīq tafāṣīli-hī wa-qad ḡaʿaltu ḡālīka ḥudūdan wa-fuṣūlan wa-abwāban wa-ḡakartu ḡumlat al-ḥudūd wa-fuṣūl fī auwal al-kitāb li-yashula ṭalabu kulli maʿnan fī makāni-hī wa-waḡaʿtu kulla nuktatin fī al-bāb alladī huwa alyaqu bi-hā wa-in kāna kaṭīrun min ḡālīka yaṣluḡu istiʿmālu-hū fī amkinatin” (1: 8). For a translation that does not clearly distinguish between *bāb*, *faṣl*, and *ḥadd*, see: Thomas, “Concept of *Muḥāḍara*”: 161–162; for the distinctive uses of these terms, compare: Lane: 273 s.v. *bāb*, 525 s.v. *ḥadd*, and 2406 s.v. *faṣl*.

This description of the relationship between the survey³⁹ and the subsequent organization of the material is precise. The twenty-five chapters of the *Muḥāḍarāt* produce a rather long list. Its complexity follows from the combination of detailed chapter headings, most of which consist of at least two keywords to indicate the topic and range of a chapter, with the subsumed section headings, which in the majority of cases are more than just one keyword. In the survey of contents the richness in detail is inducive to a careful study.⁴⁰ Readers must have grasped the survey of contents, before they could guess in which chapter (*ḥadd*) a certain section (*faṣl*) would contain the rubrics (*abwāb*) under which the needed information could have been classified.

Table 12. Chapter (*ḥadd*) and section (*faṣl*) headings
as given in the introduction of the *Muḥāḍarāt*.

1 Reason, knowledge, ignorance & that which pertains to them

Reason, stupidity, and the censure of pursuing a passion

Prudence, resolution, and that which is opposed to both &

assumption, doubt, ascertainment, and precipitation

Seeking advice and proceeding independently in one's opinion

Knowledge and learned people with regard to the praiseworthy and the blameworthy &
memory and oblivion

Learning and teaching

Eloquence and that which is opposed to it

Talking and listening & speech and silence

Consultation and disputation

Poetry and poets

Scribes and secretaryship

Misplacement of diacritical marks

Writing instruments

Being truthful and lying

39. Rāḡib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ed. Beirut, 1: 8–11.

40. That data density does not pose a cognitive problem and promotes instead an analytical reading has been argued in connection with statistical graphics by Tufte, *Visual Display*: 154–155.

Secrecy

Counsel

Exhortation and those who have been warned & those who command in a friendly manner, popular storytellers, and those who issue legal opinions

Those who deliver Friday sermons and those who recite the Koran

Physiognomy and prognostication

Interpretation of dreams

Carrying on the sciences of the communities & signs of the Arabs

2 Rule & those who hold it and its subjects

Rule and administration

Matters of the sultans' subjects

Judiciary and testimony

The ruler's veil, chamberlains, and slave boys

3 Justice & injustice; Clemency, forgiveness & punishment; Hostility & envy; and Humility & pride

Justice and injustice

Praise of clemency, the suppression of anger, mercy, and pardon & asking for forgiveness and apology

Censure of clemency and praise of punishment

Hostility

Envy

Humility and pride

4 Help & morals; Fun & shyness; Loyalty & betrayal; and High rank & depravity

Neighborhood and help

Good and bad morals

Fun and laughter with regard to the laudable and the blameworthy

Shyness and impudence

Loyalty and betrayal

Competition for noble deeds, high rank, and glory

Depravity, defaulting on honorable deeds, and shortcomings & individual respectability, manliness, and chivalry

5 Paternity, filiation & their praise and censure; and Kin

Sons and daughters

Praiseworthy and blameworthy aspects of paternity & description of clans

Claim of lineage

Kin

**6 Gratitude & praise; Censure & slander;
and Invocations, congratulations & gifts**

Gratitude

Praise and those who deserve it & satire and those who embody it

Slander and gossip

Greetings, invocations, and congratulations

Cursing a person

Gifts

Medicine and disease & the doctor's visit

7 Ambitions, good fortune & hopes

Lofty and base ambitions

Good fortune

Wishes and hopes

8 Trades, profits & fickleness; and Wealth & poverty

Profession

Transaction

Debt

Oaths

Profit and expenditure

Praise of wealth and censure of poverty

Asceticism & praise of poverty and censure of wealth

9 Gift-giving & begging

Aiming for those favors

Request

Promise & implementation and postponement

Intercession

Generosity and those who are more generous

Stinginess with possessions

10 Foods, having a meal, reception of guests & descriptions of foods

Matters of food, eating, and party-crashing

Invitation to parties

Those who are very generous when having guests

Those who are stingy when having guests

11 Drinking, beverage & their circumstances and utensils

Drinking and beverage

Banquet and boon companions

Description of gatherings and places for drinking

Utensils of drinking and gatherings

Singing, singers, and musical instruments

12 Brotherhoods

Brethren and their matters
Affection among companions
Visiting and the visited

13 Love & things pertaining to it

Descriptions of passion and circumstances of lovers
Remembrance
Leave-taking and separation
Breaking up
Crying and description of tears
Desire and yearning
Insomnia and the long lasting of stretches of time
Defamation and reproach
Concealing of passion and its exposure
Close association with the lover and exchanging letters with him
Visiting the beloved, meeting with him, gazing at him, and demand for him
Ghost
Getting rid of memories
Miscellaneous specialties belonging to love

14 Courage & that which pertains to it

Heroes and their circumstances
Threat
Weapons and those who are armed
Search for revenge and blood money
Warning against war and search for peace
Defeat
Becoming a thief
Arrest, confinement, beating, and similar things

15 Marriage, wives & divorce; and Chastity & cuckoldry

Marriage and divorce & circumstances of wives and their management
Chastity
Jealousy and cuckoldry

16 Risqué jokes & ribaldry

Prostitution between men and the active role in homosexual intercourse
The passive role in homosexual intercourse and transvestism
Mention of the two kinds of private parts and intercourse
Tribadry and masturbation
Flatulence and silent winds

17 Inborn disposition of people & their reputations

People's inborn disposition with regard to their pleasant and repulsive traits
Beautiful qualities of the beloved
Ugly qualities of the inborn disposition of women
Grey hair, youthfulness, and mention of old people
Names, names of sons, and honorifics

18 Clothes & bedding

Clothes and those who wear them
Rugs, bedding, and appliances for the dwelling

19 Censure of this world & revelation of vicissitudes

Censure of this world and its vicissitudes
Uncovering of hardships

20 Religious denominations & religious observances

God's unity, piety, oaths, penitence, reticence, Sufism, and things pertaining to them
Different legal schools.
Prophets and impostors
Matters of the Koran, its revelation, and its excellence
Religious observances of ritual purity, prayer, almsgiving, fasting, and pilgrimage
Invocations

21 Death & its circumstances

Death and its circumstances
Sorrows, perseverance, consolations, and elegies

22 Heavens & seasons; Places & waters; and Trees & fires

Day and night & heaven and stars
Seasons, clouds, rains, waters, and that which pertains to that
Spring and fall & flowers, trees, and plants
Places and buildings
Deserts
Travel
Yearning for the homelands
Fires

23 Angels & spirits

Angels
Iblīs, spirits, and devils

24 Animals

Horses, mules, and donkeys
Sheep, cows, and camels
Wild animals
Birds
Vermin

25 Miscellaneous specialities

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It is astonishing that the manuscript evidence for the use of the survey is equivocal, suggesting that for the readers the two-layered survey in the introduction was both sufficient and dispensable, despite its wealth of information. The usefulness of the survey is implied by the fact that I have not found any evidence that during the process of circulation and transmission scribes or readers experimented with the formatting or classification of the survey.⁴¹ For example, there is no indication of efforts to further facilitate orientation through numbering the sections. Nor is there any trace of superimposing a classification of subject matters or fields of knowledge onto the chapter sequence to break down the group of twenty-five chapters into smaller clusters. But the survey seems to have been of limited practical importance to readers, because I have not seen any manuscript fragment of the *Muḥāḍarāt* to which an updated survey of contents or a distinct table of contents has been appended, be it by a scribe, an owner, or a reader. There is manuscript evidence, however, that some readers, despite Rāḡib's understanding of his anthology as a reference work, studied at least longer portions of the *Muḥāḍarāt* from beginning to end. An undated *Muḥāḍarāt* fragment of the first five chapters, which Ahlwardt tentatively dated as late fourteenth century, has marginal notes by an unknown Muṣṭafā b. Muḥibb al-Dīn.⁴² These marginal notes are check marks, with which this

41. In contrast, twelfth-century anthologies of canonical Latin authors, such as the *Florilegium Angelicum* and the *Florilegium Gallicum*, were in the thirteenth century often equipped with extensive subject indices: Rouse and Rouse, *Authentic Witnesses*: 127–128 and 184–186.

42. Berlin, Staatsbibliothek – Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung, MS arab. Petermann 105; for a codicological description of the manuscript, see: Ahlwardt, *Verzeichnis*, 7: 329–331 s.v. 8346.

reader controlled the progress of his reading and copying of the fourth and fifth chapter.⁴³

While the marginal comments do not indicate whether Muṣṭafā b. Muḥibb al-Dīn took notes for himself or wrote a copy for sale,⁴⁴ his successful study of two complete chapters depended in neither case on an in-depth knowledge of the overall contents of the *Muḥāḍarāt*.

The seemingly equanimous attitude toward detailed information about the contents of the anthology could indicate that in the *Muḥāḍarāt* the order of the excerpts was a mainstream arrangement and hence self-evident for his readers. This speculation is, of course, highly problematic, because it is impossible to corroborate a negative assumption. While the methodological impasse is one consequence of our incomplete knowledge of the Islamic manuscript tradition, research on the changes that occurred in the page layout of Latin manuscripts between the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, shows that this speculation is not without merit. Although visual means and a scholarly apparatus were developed to facilitate the academic study of the Scholastic canon, they were not applied to the Bible, the backbone of Scholasticism.⁴⁵ The question becomes

43. Berlin, Staatsbibliothek – Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Orientabteilung, MS arab. Petermann 105: “waffaqa Allāh ‘azza wa-ḡalla wa-saddada fa-balaḡa al-‘abd al-Muṣṭafā b. Muḥibb al-Dīn ilā hādā al-maḥall muṭāla‘atan nashān” *God, who is powerful, glorious, and guiding the right way, grants success and so his servant Muṣṭafā b. Muḥibb al-Dīn has reached this place silently reading and copying* (fol.181r); for the other marginal notes, compare fol.138r, 140r, 147r, 151r, 155v, 158v, 162r, and 166r. That the verb *ṭāla‘a* denotes silent reading for comprehension, as opposed to recitation (*qirā’a*) or dictation (*imlā’*), is argued convincingly by Messick, *Calligraphic State*: 91; compare: Lane: 1868 s.v. *ṭāla‘a-hū*.

44. Among the identified fragments of the *Muḥāḍarāt* there is a copy—Leiden, University Library – Legatum Warnerianum, MS arab. Or. 178 (1)— that consists of notes compiled for personal use; see above, chapter II, note 34.

45. Parkes, “Influence”: “The Bible text was sufficiently familiar to the reader so that no further ostensible guide to the arrangement of the material was required, and in such circumstances no further developments were stimulated.” (117).

then how familiar Middle-Eastern audiences were with comprehensive compilations in general, and with anthologies of literary Arabic in particular. The question is relevant because it directs attention to the literary traditions with which both Rāḡib and the readers of the *Muḥāḍarāt* were familiar.

The first anthologies of Arabic prose are ascribed to ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd al-Kātib (died 750) and ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Muqaffaʿ (died 757), who both worked for the caliphate’s chancery. Various types of prose compilations and composition handbooks emerged and became popular with those who needed an active mastery of the Arabic language. In the midst of the ninth century, Ḡāḥiẓ and Ibn Qutaiba wrote numerous compilations and prose compositions that were almost immediately counted among the masterworks of literary Arabic.⁴⁶ Although the authors of compilations received credit for intellectual labor, since the compilations did not circulate as the works of anonymous authors, their contents consisted of excerpts in prose and in verse gleaned from a large variety of secular and religious sources.⁴⁷ Themes, rather than authors, determined their organization. The same preference was at work when, in the eighth and ninth centuries,

46. For the claim that in the field of *adab*, defined as non-technical literature in the genres of prose essays and anthologies, monographic essays emerged before anthologies, although the process of anthologization appeared simultaneously, see: Rosenthal, *Knowledge*: 252–253. This opinion is accepted as “eminently reasonable, given the data we presently have,” by Malti-Douglas, *Structures*: 12.

47. Wilfried Barner in Herzog and Koselleck, *Epochenschwelle*: “Als Ensemble gesellschaftlicher Erfahrung ist Tradition bestimmte Struktur. Sie umschließt nicht schlechthin alles, was sich ‘erhalten’ hat, sondern Ausgewähltes; sie ist, wie man neuerdings namentlich mit Bezug auf die Literatur betont hat, Ergebnis von Selektion – sei diese nun ‘geworden’ oder ‘gemacht’. Insofern Tradiertes ausgewählt ist, bleibt es aus dem diffus ‘Vergangenen’ herausgehoben als etwas die Gesellschaft oder eine Gruppe Angehendes. Es hat eine Verbindlichkeit, deren Stärke und Reichweite von der ihres Trägers abhängig ist. In tra-ditio (wie in παρά-δοσις) ist prinzipiell die Weiter-gabe als personale Vermittlung impliziert. Dieses Personale ist originär der Grund für die Verbürgtheit des Tradierten (zugleich der Ansatzpunkt zu jeglicher Ideologisierung von Tradition).” (13).

the oral tradition of pre-Islamic and early Islamic Arabic poetry was transformed into a written canon. Thematic anthologies, such as the *Muʿallaqāt* (*Poems that Hung in the Kaaba*), the *Aṣmaʿīyāt* (*Poems that the Philologist al-Aṣmaʿī* (died c.828) *Collected*), or the *Ḥamāsa* (*Bravery in War*), preceded divans, the collections of all poems ascribed to a particularly revered author.⁴⁸

In the late tenth or early eleventh century, when Rāḡib compiled the *Muḥāḍarāt*, a wide variety of compilations and miscellanies were available for all fields of knowledge.

But in the introduction Rāḡib described his sources in frustratingly general terms:

that I choose for him [i.e., our master] from that, which I have compiled from the *Wisecracks among the Stories*, from *The Best Poems*, and from other books, divided into *Conversations among Men of Letters and Debates between Men of Poetry and Rhetoric*, to make him [i.e., our master] a tool to refine his discernment and a fundamental constituent of his knowledge.⁴⁹

Aside from the only mention of the full title within the complete text of *Muḥāḍarāt*,⁵⁰ the passage does not contain any verifiable data. While the parallel construction of the three

48. The gap between an author's life and the emergence of bibliographies of his or her complete works is one reason, aside from the paucity of research on the book trade in medieval Islamic societies, for the difficulties with sorting the authentic from the apocryphal. Moreover, the cases of ʿĠāḥiz and Muḥyī al-Dīn b. al-ʿArabī (died 1240) illustrate that this gap was not limited to the transmission of pre-Islamic Arabic poetry.

49. Rāḡib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ed. Beirut: “an aḥṭāra la-hū [i.e., saiyidi-nā] mim mā ṣannaftu min *Nukat al-aḥbār* wa-min ‘*Uyūn al-aṣṣār*’ wa-min ḡairi-himā min al-kutub fuṣūlan fī *Muḥāḍarāt al-udabāʾ* wa-muḥāwarāt al-ṣurāʾ wa-l-bulaḡā’ yaḡʿalu-hū ṣaiqal al-fahm wa-māddat al-‘ilm.” (1: 7; italics mine).

50. It is a nicely understated rhetorical sleight of hand that Rāḡib sandwiched the only mention of the complete title of his anthology within the text itself between the obligatory remarks about its sources and its educational goals. Although it is a standard feature of introductions to provide the full title of the introduced work, in none of the Middle-Eastern imprints has the sandwiched title been set-off by visual means, such as brackets or overlining: Rāḡib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ed. Samalūṭī, 1: 2; Rāḡib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ed. Zaidān: 2; Rāḡib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ed. Faiyūmī, 1:2; and Rāḡib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ed. Beirut, 1: 7. It is unclear whether the title has been recognized in a translation of that passage in Thomas, “Concept of *Muḥāḍara*”: 159. The title of the *Muḥāḍarāt* appears otherwise only on title pages, colophons, and so forth. In contrast, for an incomplete survey of Rāwandī's references to the title of his miscellany, full as well as abbreviated, see above, chapter III, note 117.

prepositional objects implies that *Nukat al-aḥbār* (Wisecracks among the Stories) and *‘Uyūn al-aš‘ār* (The Best Poems) are titles of books, their titles are unfortunately very generic. It is striking that there is not even indirect evidence that they ever existed.⁵¹ Moreover, the absence of functional data, as discussed in connection with the unnamed patron, is a salient feature of the introduction of the *Muḥāḍarāt*.⁵² Nevertheless important information can be gleaned from this passage. Although oral and written forms of the transmission of knowledge coexisted in medieval Islamic societies, Rāḡib referred, however vaguely, only to written sources. Despite their lack of specificity the titles *Nukat al-aḥbār* and *‘Uyūn al-aš‘ār* have the ring of titles of thematic anthologies of the *Best-of-...-variety*.

At this point a look at the development of Latin anthologies is again instructive because their arrangements of contents document that within medieval Latin literature a sequence of famous works by great men preceded a sequence of subject matters. In the twelfth century, Latin anthologies originated as library substitutes in which the arrangement of the short excerpts followed the systematic order of texts within a library. The excerpts were grouped according to their origin in works of respected authorities.⁵³ In the thirteenth century, these anthologies were reorganized so that their excerpts were

51. Thomas, “Concept of *Muḥāḍara*”: 159 note 17.

52. See above, chapter II, notes 31 and 33.

53. Meier, “Grundzüge”: “Die Enzyklopädie ist auch in dem Sinn ›Weltbuch‹, Buch par excellence, daß sie eine Bibliothek, eine große Zahl von Spezialwerken ersetzen kann; ein Buch vereinigt in sich den Inhalt vieler Bücher, den Inhalt des Weltwissens. ... In Zeiten lebend, in denen der abgeschriebene Kodex oder das noch kostspielig gedruckte Buch ein besonderer Wertgegenstand sind, sehen viele Autoren in solcher praktischen Nutzbarkeit ihres Kompendiums seinen Hauptverdienst.” (475–476).

now presented within a system of subject matters that more immediately reflected the concrete need for consulting models of elegant and efficient language use, as taught within the *ars dictaminis* and *artes praecandi*.⁵⁴ The juxtaposition of Latin and Arabic anthologies serves, on the one hand, as a salutary warning that the relationship between anthologies and single-author monographs can evolve in either direction, from a selection of single-author monographs to an anthology, and vice versa. The similarities between Latin and Arabic anthologies indicate, on the other hand, that the *Muḥāḍarāt* is already a super-anthology because Rāḡib presented his compilation as a selection of excerpts from other written anthologies. The assumption that the *Muḥāḍarāt* was compiled when the anthology was a fully established genre of written Arabic literature so that the framework of its composition had reached an advanced stage of conventionality is supported by Rāḡib's vague remarks about his sources.⁵⁵ There is no reason to waste words on that with which readers are familiar.

The seemingly indifferent attitude toward the full identification of his sources is common to both Rāḡib and Rāwandī, and, as mentioned earlier, twentieth-century scholars censured them sternly: Rāḡib is dismissed as a dull, indiscriminate hack,⁵⁶ and

54. Rouse and Rouse, *Authentic Witnesses*: 127–128 and 184–186. For general remarks about the medieval *ars dictaminis* or *ars dictandi*, compare: Curtius, *European Literature*: 75–76 and 148–151. For the observation that anthologies planned as reference books of *ars dictaminis* and *artes praecandi* were clearly distinguished from *summae* designed as instruction manuals for the study of philosophy and theology, see: Wolfgang Kemp in Haverkamp and Lachmann, *Memoria*: 278 note 34; compare: Yates, *Art of Memory*: 85.

55. For a comparison of the *Muḥāḍarāt* and Ibn Qutaiba's *ʿUyūn al-aḥbār* that documents how the older Ibn Qutaiba recorded the origins of his excerpts more completely and provided in the introduction a lengthy explication of contents and arrangements, see: Thomas, "Concept of *Muḥāḍara*": 201–205 (citing of sources) and 227–238 (explication of contents and arrangement in the introduction).

56. See above, chapter II, note 141.

Rāwandī disqualified as a plagiarist.⁵⁷ While the common criticism reflects the problems that compilations, be they anthologies or miscellanies, pose to modern scholars, it is of little explanatory value for the question of how Middle-Eastern audiences used, and continue to use, these compilations. The analysis of the reception of these two works did not yield any evidence that, until the beginning of the twentieth-century, readers of either work missed complete bibliographical references to the excerpted material. Moreover, the consistent use of *isnāds* with regard to the transmission of religious and legal knowledge suggests that the identification of sources, be they people or books, depended on the context in which they were cited, implying that the usefulness of the *Muḥāḍarāt* and the *Rāḥat* was not bound to the full disclosure of their many sources.⁵⁸

Rāḡib's survey displays the *Muḥāḍarāt*'s contents within a thematic grid of sections and rubrics that ordered the myriad of short excerpts and therefore allowed his readers to search the chapter sequence with the help of thematic keywords.⁵⁹ The use of the grid reflects that exemplary expressions of literary Arabic are the building blocks of the anthology, which, conversely, are sorted within a thematically organized card

57. See above, chapter III, note 243.

58. Parkes, "Influence": "The practice of indicating sources in the margin derived from earlier manuscripts is here [i.e., in glossed Bible commentaries of the twelfth century] systematized, and becomes the ancestor of the modern scholarly apparatus of footnotes." (116–117). For the assumption that the incomplete referencing of his sources, especially his casual dispensation with *isnāds*, suggests Rāḡib's independence from the literary tradition, see: Sārīsī, *Al-Rāḡib al-Isfahānī*. 151; and Thomas, "The Concept of *Muḥāḍara*": 201–202.

59. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*: "a totalizing classificatory grid which could be applied with endless flexibility to anything under the state's real or contemplated control: peoples, regions, religions, languages, products, monuments, and so forth. The effect of the grid was always to be able to say of anything that it was this, and not that; it belonged here, not there. ... The particular always stood as a provisional representative of a series, and was to be handled in this light." (184).

catalogue. In contrast, the *Rāḥat* is a miscellany focused on the Great Seljuq sultanate. Although Rāwandī enriched his text with a multitude of quotations in verse and prose,⁶⁰ he composed a coherent text from different sources, dividing the text into three thematic parts on justice, institutional history, and courtly etiquette. Rāwandī summarized the contents of the miscellany in whole sentences, but he did not identify its three parts as separate units, and did not number them in sequence. He presented his survey of contents as an outline highlighting principal components, irrespective of whether they were parts, chapters, sections, or poems.⁶¹ The introductory heading—“*fihrist-i kitāb-i Rāḥat al-ṣudūr wa-āyat al-surūr u-tartīb-i mustauda‘āt-i ān az funūn-i ‘ilm*”⁶²—contains the technical terms *fihrist* and *tartīb*, indicating that the list of components (*fihrist*) is supplemented with analytical remarks about their arrangement (*tartīb*).⁶³

60. For identified Arabic proverbs as well as excerpts from poetry (*šī‘r*) and epics (*maṭnawī*), see: Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: XXII–XXVI. That anthologies have been used for both dressing up a text with fancy citations and identifying excerpts is demonstrated by Iqbāl’s use of the *Kitāb al-farā‘id wa-l-qalā‘id* (Book of Precious Gems and Necklaces) by Abū Maṣṣūr ‘Abd al-Malik al-Ta‘ālibī (961–1038). Since Iqbāl identified the *Rāḥat*’s Arabic proverbs with the help of Ta‘ālibī’s anthology, he concluded that Rāwandī had excerpted Ta‘ālibī’s anthology: “In all, the author [i.e., Rāwandī] cites 264 Arabic proverbs, almost all of them borrowed without any acknowledgment from Tha‘ālibī’s book” (XXII).

61. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: 63 lines 5–19.

62. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: 63 lines 3–4.

63. Gacek, *Arabic Manuscript Tradition*: 53 s.v. *tartīb*, and 111 s.v. *fihris*, *fihrist*.

Table 13. Contents of the *Rāḥat* as outlined by Rāwandī in the introduction.

Praise of God
 Panegyric of Muḥammad as well as of his family, his companions, and the imams of the faith
 Panegyric of Kai Ḥusrau
Qaṣīda by the author
 The author about himself and his book
 Justice that is the character of Kai Ḥusrau
 Brief history of the monarchy and the institution of the sultanate of the Seljuq family, including the mention of contemporary poets and poems recited before these excellencies, while every reign is concluded with an invocation and a *qaṣīda* on behalf of Kai Ḥusrau
 Chapter about the etiquette of boon companions, wine, and the playing of chess and backgammon
 Chapter about archery, horse racing, and the etiquette of the hunt, the royal court, battle, and banquet
 Chapter about calligraphy
 Chapter about numerical divination
 Short chapter about potency-enhancing drugs
 The conclusion consisting of some jokes and risqué stories

A comparison of this list with the sequence of the headings in the unique manuscript reveals two conspicuous differences between the survey of contents and the actual text of the *Rāḥat*. Both differences indicate that the survey of contents oriented the reader without being absolutely binding for that which was going to come. The first difference is that Rāwandī, as discussed in connection with his autobiographical statement, did not adhere to his own outline.⁶⁴ He ended the miscellany after the chapter about numerical divination and added an apologetic postscript about his change of mind.⁶⁵

64. See above, chapter III, note 184.

65. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: “u-agarče dar fihrist-i kitāb šart rafte būd ke ḥatm-i dar maḍāḥik karde nabūd ḡaʿmī az buzurgān u-dūstān ilḥāḥ u-iqtirāḥ farmūdand ke dāman az ān kašīde u-barčīde mī bāyad dāšt če šuḡlī bī adabāne ast u-az bahr-i tafarruḡ-i ḥawāṣṣ u-tanazzuh-i ʿawāmm ān-rā ḡudāḡāne kitābī sāḡtan u-īn kitāb bar duʿā-yi daulat-i pādīšāh ḥatm kardan u-īn ḥidmat bi-hazl-i mašūb nakardan u-bar fawāyid-i ʿilmī u-duʿā-yi daulat-i sultān-i ʿālam bi-āḡir āwardan” *Although in the list of the book it was stipulated that he [i.e.,*

It is arresting is that Ilyās b. ʿAbd Allāh, the scribe of the unique manuscript, adjusted neither the survey nor the postscript to the actual contents of the miscellany. The observation suggests that, although within the manuscript tradition the correction of mistakes belonged to a scribe's responsibilities, Ilyās b. ʿAbd Allāh did not consider this discrepancy something he was obliged or authorized to fix. His hands-off attitude corresponds to the absence of any traces that the owners or readers of the manuscript felt the urge to scribble notes about this discrepancy on the margins or to add their own surveys of contents to the text of the *Rāḥat*.⁶⁶

The other difference concerns the role that Rāwandī assigned to poetry in general and panegyric poetry in particular. In the survey of contents in the introduction, he expounded which poetry he would adduce in the institutional history:

Let me briefly tell the history of the reign and the institution of the sultanate of the Seljuq family. Let me recall the contemporary poets and the poems that they recited for these excellencies. At the end of the account of every reign, let me say an invocation on behalf of the monarch Kai Ḥusrau and a poem in his praise.⁶⁷

Rāwandī concluded with funny stories, it was not. A number of great men and friends urged and proposed that, since such an occupation is not courteous, he must withdraw the chapter to write it as a separate book for the sake of the recreation of noble people and the diversion of common folks and to conclude instead with an invocation to the monarch's good fortune, and not to render this service with tainted bawdry jokes and to bring instead at the end erudite remarks and an invocation to the good fortune of the sultan of the world. (457–458).

66. The unique manuscript has a contemporary thirteenth-century binding, though it is unknown when the binding was joined to the manuscript: Richard, "Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, MS supplément pers.1314;" and Richard, *Splendeurs persans*: 42 s.v. 8. The manuscript was cropped for the binding; see above, chapter II, note 185. Theoretically, it is possible that a later added survey of contents was removed when the *Rāḥat* manuscript was bound, or rebound.

67. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: "tārīḫ-i pādīshāhī u-ā'in-i sulṭanat-i āl-i Salḡūq bar sabīl-i iḥtiṣār bigūyam u-dīkr-i šu'arā-yi muta'aḥḥir u-šī'r-hā'ī ke dar ḥadrat-i īsān ḥ"ānde and biyāram u-dar āḥir-i dīkr-i har sulṭānī du'ā-yi pādīshāh-i Kaiḥusrau bigūyam u-qaṣīde-yi madḥ-i ū" (63).

On the one hand, Rāwandī would include the poetry composed for and about various Great Seljuq sultans. On the other, he would conclude each chapter with an invocation and poetry on behalf of his dedicatee. This interest in poetry is not recognizable if the headings of the manuscript serve as guideposts for summarizing the contents of the miscellany. Not every poem has its own overlined and rubricated heading. Moreover, Rāwandī wrote his miscellany in a formal style, so the text is permeated with citations in prose and verse.⁶⁸ In the unique manuscript, Ilyās b. °Abd Allāh relied on distinct page layouts to clearly set off verses from prose, utilizing for instance columns and considerably larger margins for the poems. The poetry is therefore easy to find, even when just casually flipping through the manuscript. In the twentieth-century imprint, however, the visual differentiation between verses and prose is much less striking. The following table of the complete poems and verses that Rāwandī cited at the end of each chapter illustrates how he adhered to his two rules for the quotation of poetry.

Table 14. Poems and verses cited in each chapter of the institutional history of the *Rāḥat*.

<i>The beginning of the Seljuq sultanate</i>	= /	
<i>Ṭuḡril I</i>	= stanzaic panegyric by Rāwandī	
	in praise of Kai Ḥusrau	= p.114–116
<i>Alb Arslān</i>	= <i>qaṣīda</i> 1 by Rāwandī in praise of Kai Ḥusrau	= p.123–124
<i>Malik Ṣāh I</i>	= excerpt from < Nizāmī's <i>Ḥusrau u-Šīrīn</i> >	
	in praise of Kai Ḥusrau	= p.138
<i>Barkiyāruq</i>	= <i>qaṣīda</i> 2 by Rāwandī in praise of Kai Ḥusrau	= p.150–152
<i>Muḥammad I</i>	= Rāwandī's <i>duʿāʾ</i> on behalf of Kai Ḥusrau	= p.165–167

68. For Rāwandī's formal style, see above, chapter II, note 213; and chapter III, note 250.

<i>Sanğar</i>	= <i>qaṣīda</i> 1 by Ḥasan al-Ġaznawī	= p.187–189
	= <i>qaṣīda</i> 2 by Ḥasan al-Ġaznawī	= p.189–192
	= <i>qaṣīda</i> 3 by Ḥasan al-Ġaznawī	= p.192–193
	= <i>qaṣīda</i> 4 by Ḥasan al-Ġaznawī	= p.193–196
	= <i>qaṣīda</i> 1 by Anwarī	= p.196–198
	= <i>duʿā</i> by Anwarī on behalf of Sulaimān	= p.198
	= <i>qaṣīda</i> 2 by Anwarī	= p.199–200
	= <i>qiṭʿa</i> 1 by Anwarī	= p.200–201
	= <i>qiṭʿa</i> 2 by Anwarī	= p.201
	= <i>qiṭʿa</i> 3 by Anwarī	= p.201
	= panegyric verses by Anwarī	= p.202
	= five <i>dūbait</i> by Anwarī	= p.202–203
<i>Maḥmūd II</i>	= <i>qaṣīda</i> 3 by Rāwandī in praise of Kai Ḥusrau	= p.206–208
<i>Ṭuğril II</i>	= <i>qaṣīda</i> 1 by ʿImādī	= p.210–212
	= <i>qaṣīda</i> 2 by ʿImādī	= p.212–214
	= <i>qaṣīda</i> 4 by Rāwandī in praise of Kai Ḥusrau	= p.222–224
<i>Masʿūd</i>	= <i>muḥtārāt</i> from an Arabic <i>qaṣīda</i> by Ṭuğrāʾī	= p.240–241
	= <i>martiya</i> by Ḥasan al-Ġaznawī	= p.246–248
	= <i>qiṭʿa</i> by Rāwandī	
	used as <i>duʿā</i> on behalf of Kai Ḥusrau	= p.248–249
<i>Malik Šāh III</i>	= stanzaic panegyric by Ḥasan al-Ġaznawī	= p.251–254
	= <i>qaṣīda</i> 5 by Rāwandī on behalf of Kai Ḥusrau	= p.257–258
<i>Muḥammad II</i>	= <i>qaṣīda</i> 6 by Rāwandī on behalf of Kai Ḥusrau	= p.271–274
<i>Sulaimān</i>	= <i>qaṣīda</i> 5 by Ḥasan al-Ġaznawī	= p.275–277
	= <i>qaṣīda</i> 7 by Rāwandī in praise of Kai Ḥusrau	= p.280–281
<i>Arslān</i>	= <i>qaṣīda</i> 1 by Muğīr al-Dīn al-Bailaqānī	= p.301–305
	= <i>qaṣīda</i> 2 by Muğīr al-Dīn al-Bailaqānī	= p.305–309
	= <i>qaṣīda</i> 3 by Muğīr al-Dīn al-Bailaqānī	= p.309–313
	= <i>qaṣīda</i> 4 by Muğīr al-Dīn al-Bailaqānī	= p.313–319
	= <i>qaṣīda</i> 5 by Muğīr al-Dīn al-Bailaqānī	= p.319–322
	= <i>martiya</i> by Muğīr al-Dīn al-Bailaqānī	= p.322–327
	= stanzaic panegyric by Aḥsīkatī	= p.327–330
<i>Ṭuğril III</i>	= <i>martiya</i> by Rāwandī about the execution	
	of his former employer ʿArab Šāh	= p.353–355
	= verses from a <i>martiya</i> by < ʿImādī >	= p.372
	= verses from a <i>martiya</i> by	
	< Ġamāl al-Dīn b. ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Iṣfahānī >	= p.373
	= verses from a <i>martiya</i> by	
	< Ġamāl al-Dīn b. ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Iṣfahānī >	= p.373–374
	= verses from a <i>martiya</i> by	
	< Ġamāl al-Dīn b. ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Iṣfahānī >	= p.374
<i>The conquest of</i>		
<i>the Khwarazm Shahs</i>	= <i>qaṣīda</i> 8 by Rāwandī in praise of Kai Ḥusrau	= p.403–405

Even though Rāwandī did not end every chapter with poetry on behalf of his dedicatee, he always included invocations on behalf of Kai Ḥusrau, and, after the introductory chapter about the rise of the Seljuq family, he ended every chapter with poetry. The table shows that Rāwandī used his own poems whenever there were no contemporary poems available. Two exceptions are remarkable. Rāwandī concluded the chapter about Malik Šāh I (ruled 1073–1092) with thirteen lines from Niẓāmī's *Ḥusrau u-Šīrīn*, as usual without identifying the epic (*maṭnawī*) or its author.⁶⁹ In the chapter about Ṭuğril III, he quoted verses from elegies without attributing them to ʿImādī (died 1186) and Ġamāl al-Dīn b. ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Iṣfahānī (died 1192).⁷⁰ Since ʿImādī and Ġamāl al-Dīn died before Ṭuğril III was killed in battle in the spring of 1194, none of the cited lines was actually composed about the death of the last Great Seljuq sultan. Still, Rāwandī's omission is salient because, earlier in the text, when he cited poems (*qaṣʿida*) and not just verses (*šīʿr*), he had properly attributed those to Ġamāl al-Dīn and ʿImādī.⁷¹ Otherwise Rāwandī clearly identified the authors⁷² whenever he quoted poems and longer selections of verses in the institutional history, though he did not document how he had learned these poems, from teachers, friends, or written anthologies and divans.

69. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: 137–138, and 137 note 2 for Iqbāl's identification of the excerpt. For Rāwandī's approach to *Ḥusrau u-Šīrīn*, see above, chapter III, note 245.

70. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: 372 lines 1-9 and 371 note 5 (ʿImādī); and 373 lines 1-7 and note 372 note 3, 373 line 11–374 line 7 and 373 note 1, and 374 lines 9-13 and 374 note 4 (Ġamāl al-Dīn).

71. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: 33 lines 10-11 (Ġamāl al-Dīn); and 210 line 4 (ʿImādī).

72. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: 187 line 13 (Ḥasan al-Ġaznawī); 196 line 3 (Anwarī); 210 line 4 (ʿImādī); 239 line 14 (Ṭuğrāʾī); 245 line 18, 252 line 7, and 275 lines 10-11 (Ḥasan al-Ġaznawī); 301 line 13 (Muğīr al-Dīn al-Bailaqānī); and 327 line 11 (al-Aṭīr al-Aḥsīkātī).

In the chapter about Sanğar (ruled 1118–1157), Rāwandī included for the first time multiple poems, and felt obliged in this context to further explain his policy of selecting poetry about the Seljuq sultans:

It has been stipulated in the list of the *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr* that, although the panegyrists of the sultans of the family of Salğūq are many, the poetry of contemporary poets will be adduced. From every poem no more than one-hundred to two-hundred distichs are adduced so that the illuminated mind of the monarch does not get bored and is not wearied and, instead, seeks entertainment from it and pursues the course of pleasure. The praise of every sultan will be adduced in the history of his state.⁷³

Rāwandī clarified that he focused on contemporary poetry despite the multitude of poets who had composed panegyrics for the Great Seljuqs. With the exception of Ṭuğrā'ī, Rāwandī quoted the work of poets who lived in the second half of the twelfth century, probably all at least a generation older than himself: Ḥasan al-Ġaznawī (died c. 1161), Anwarī (died between 1150 and 1200), 'Imādī, Muğīr al-Dīn al-Bailaqānī (fl. 1160–1176), and al-Aṭīr al-Aḥsīkatī (died c. 1182). Rāwandī then argued that he significantly shortened the included poetry to fight off his dedicatee's fatigue. This admission indicates that naming the author and using the term *qaṣ'ida* does not exclude the possibility that Rāwandī edited the poems to fit the purposes of his miscellany. But the liberty to pick and choose also recalls the anecdote in which Ḥasan al-Ġaznawī explained how to become a poet: The aspiring poet is advised to select and memorize up to two-hundred lines from the acknowledged tradition, comprising the Persian poets 'Imādī, Anwarī, Ḥasan al-Ġaznawī, and Abū al-Farağ Rūnī (died between 1098 and 1114), as

73. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: “šarḥ rafte ast dar fihrist-i kitāb-i *Rāḥat al-ṣudūr* ke agarče mādiḥān-i salāṭīn-i āl-i Salğūq bisyār-and šī'r-i muta'ahḥirān āwarde šawad u-az har šī'rī qadr-i šad yā diwīst bait bīš nabāšad tā ḥātīr-i munauwar-i ḥudāwand sa'āmat nagīrad u-malālat napaḍīrad u-az ān tamāšā ḡūyad u-rāh-i tafarruḡ pūyad u-madh-i har sulṭānī dar ta'rīḥ-i daulat-i ū āwarde šawad” (193).

well as Arabic proverbs, Arabic poetry, and the *Šāhnāme*.⁷⁴ These observations suggest that the poetic canon of acknowledged masterworks has an intrinsic quality that does not prohibit editing the actual text of these masterworks. Their outstanding quality is not diminished if lesser masters revised them for incorporation into their own works. It is significant that Rāwandī perceived the need to amend his introduction by explicitly stating that he would not quote complete poems.

Rāwandī's attitude toward the survey of contents in the introduction of the *Rāḥat* corresponds to the absence of any traces of updated surveys of contents of *Muḥāḍarāt* fragments. Rāwandī took the liberty to deviate from his own outline without updating the survey of contents, whereas neither scribes nor readers wrote new actualized surveys for the contents of incomplete *Muḥāḍarāt* manuscripts. In the two unlike compilations, the survey of contents enjoyed essentially the same function as a useful, though not indispensable, means of orientation. These considerations about the attitudes of author and readers toward an obligatory component of an Islamic manuscript suggest two lines of inquiry that are beyond the scope of this research. On the one hand, a comparison between drafts and final versions with regard to the presentation of the survey of contents could provide insights into the writing process.⁷⁵ The interpretation of the observation that Rāwandī did not adjust and specify the survey of contents in the introduction hinges also on the answer to the question of how Rāwandī utilized outlines and drafts while composing the miscellany. Unfortunately, this question cannot be answered for Rāwandī

74. See above, chapter III, note 170.

75. For considerations of how to imagine writing processes in the manuscript age, see above, chapter II, note 36; and chapter III, note 206.

because the *Rāḥat* is only extant in a unique manuscript. On the other hand, the analysis of the survey of contents in others works, for which a rich manuscript tradition has been preserved, so that changes would be recognizable, should yield broader evidence for the attitudes toward this orientation device in general, and for the relationship between specific literary genres and the available formats of a survey of contents in particular. The available data for the *Muḥāḍarāt* suggest that its contents was not updated over the centuries, yet it is sensible to distinguish between conservatism in the field of language teaching and the practical needs to adjust, for example, the contents of legal and medical handbooks to political, socioeconomic, and scientific developments.

Only when the complete *Muḥāḍarāt* imprint was published in Egypt and the critical edition of the *Rāḥat* appeared in Britain did editors create separate tables of contents that supplemented, but did not substitute, the survey of contents in the introduction. For his 1870 edition of the *Muḥāḍarāt*, Samalūṭī collated manuscript fragments and provided a distinct Ottoman-style table of contents with pagination.⁷⁶ His editorial decisions neither to delete the survey from the introduction nor to eliminate discrepancies⁷⁷ between his new table of contents and the transmitted survey of contents

76. Unfortunately, Samalūṭī did not provide any information about the manuscript sources of the 1870 edition; see above, chapter II, note 97. Considering the Ottoman style of this imprint, it is theoretically possible that Samalūṭī relied on an Ottoman fragment, already equipped with an Ottoman-style table of contents; see above, chapter II, note 42.

77. In the fourth chapter, for example, the discrepancies between the headings of the last two sections are not resolved: Rāḡib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ed. Samalūṭī, 1: 3, as well as iii (table of contents) and 184. That this discrepancy appears unchanged in the Beirut edition is further evidence for the, repeatedly mentioned, direct link between the imprints of 1870 and 1961: Rāḡib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ed. Beirut, 1: 9, as well as 368 (table of contents) and 292. Discrepancies between the survey of contents in the introduction, the French-style table of contents, and the headings of chapters and sections within the text of the Beirut edition have been noted as matters of fact by Thomas, “Concept of *Muḥāḍara*”: 243–248; compare 178 note 38.

are illuminating, because he worked toward the end of the manuscript age in the Middle East, and hence was familiar with both manuscripts and imprints. The twentieth-century editors of the *Muḥāḍarāt* and the *Rāḥat* also perceived paginated tables of contents as necessary, and made the same decisions as Samalūṭī. In the Beirut edition of the *Muḥāḍarāt* and in the critical edition of the *Rāḥat*, the survey of contents has been retained in the introduction,⁷⁸ while new tables of contents were added. In the anonymous Beirut edition a partial table of contents follows in accordance with French conventions concerning the text of individual volumes.⁷⁹ Iqbāl adhered to British conventions and placed his own table of contents, covering parts and chapters of the *Rāḥat* as well as his own critical apparatus, at the beginning.⁸⁰ In the 1993 edition of the *Muḥāḍarāt*'s Persian abridgment, Muḡāhid included a literal translation of Rāḡib's introduction, complete with the survey of contents, because the three preserved manuscripts of the Persian abridgment had neither an introduction nor a survey of contents.⁸¹ Muḡāhid set off this supplement through a separate pagination and inserted it between his own introduction and the first chapter of the anthology, thus placing it in the traditional position in Islamic manuscripts, so that the survey of contents directly precedes the beginning of the anthology.⁸² He

78. Rāḡib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ed. Beirut, 1: 8–11; and Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: 63 lines 5–19. Iqbāl's critical edition preserved the solid and unilluminated text-block of the unique *Rāḥat* manuscript, but in the Beirut edition of the *Muḥāḍarāt* the original text-block is broken down into twenty-five bold chapter headings, the respective sections of which follow as text-block paragraphs.

79. Rāḡib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ed. Beirut, 1: 368, 2: 729, and 4: 725; the missing table of contents for the third volume is probably a production error.

80. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: ḡīm–dāl.

81. Rāḡib, *Nawādir*: alif note 1.

82. Rāḡib, *Nawādir*: ḡīm–ḥā'.

formatted the survey as a paginated table of contents, documenting, though not commenting on, the conspicuous fact that the table of the unabridged Arabic original also fit the seventeenth-century Persian abridgment. His obvious concern for equipping his readers with an orientation device for the anthology did not prevent the curious omission that the critical edition lacks a table of contents to facilitate access to Muğāhid's own introduction and apparatus.

IV. c. **How to make sense of parataxis: *Ordo rerum* and *ordo artium***

In the *Muḥāḍarāt* and the *Rāḥat* the contents are arranged in a paratactic sequence that presents all components on the same level. As already discussed, the paratactic order has been interpreted as an open, descending order. But this interpretation is not only untenable on logical grounds, it is also invalidated by the surveys of contents that Rāḡib and Rāwandī included in their introductions to orient their audiences. How the authors summarized the contents of their compilations documents that different forms of a hypotactic order are subsumed under the overarching paratactic order. In the *Muḥāḍarāt*, the paratactic chapter sequence is the foundation of a three-layered text divided into chapters, sections, and rubrics. Rāḡib combined parataxis and hypotaxis through organizing the literary excerpts within the individual chapters through a thematic grid of sections and rubrics. In the introduction he reduced the complexity of his three-layered text by devising a two-layered survey of chapters and sections to outline the contents of the anthology. In the *Rāḥat*, Rāwandī made hierarchical decisions when he merged the concept of an institutional history with that of an anthology of poems. The successive

reigns of the Great Seljuq sultans constitute the chronological framework into which the selected poems are incorporated. Rāwandī alluded to his joining of parataxis and hypotaxis by using the technical terms *fihrist* and *tartīb* when he summarized the contents of the miscellany in the introduction.

These observations about the cooperation between parataxis and hypotaxis in both compilations illustrate the pragmatic necessity of relying on a minimum of rules to accommodate a maximum of material: The less rules the reader must apply to search a text, the more accessible its contents, and the more useful the resulting book. Although fairly obvious, this commonsense consideration is significant because the *Muḥāḍarāt* and the *Rāḥat* are complex, comprehensive works. The pragmatic necessity reflects that both compilations were conceived as textbooks, and pragmatic considerations must have influenced the arrangement of their contents. Yet the structural prominence of their paratactic backbones corresponds to a lower degree of hierarchical systematization that in turn causes, on the one hand, the impression of a vast collection of loosely connected excerpts, and veils, on the other hand, the high selectivity of the contents. Neither Rāḡib nor Rāwandī claimed to cover everything in their compilation. The *Muḥāḍarāt* is a tool to hone the reader's grasp of literary Arabic:

An outstanding man is whoever directs his ambition to an object of respect such as this book, and whoever is adorned with the masterpieces of Arabic letters so that therewith he becomes liberated in his language and fluent in his eloquence. From how many men of letters did the spontaneity of speech stay away in many situations!⁸³

83. Rāḡib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ed. Beirut, 1: “Auwal man yaṣrifu himmata-hū ilā murāʿāt miṭla hādā al-kitāb man taḥallā bi-ṭuraf min al-ādāb fa-yaṣīra bi-hī ṭalīq al-lisān ḍalīq al-bayān fa-kam min al-adīb tataqāʿadu bi-hī badāhat al-maqāl” (7–8).

In contrast, the exploration of how Seljuq rule was lost and how it could be reconstituted in western Iran if a Seljuq sultan were to defeat the Khwarazm Shahs, justifies calling the *Rāḥat* a political pamphlet:

The purpose of this compilation is the remembrance of the titles, names, and noble lineage of the just monarch and victorious sultan ... Abū al-Faṭḥ Kai Ḥusrau b. Qiliğ Arslān b. Masʿūd b. Qiliğ Arslān b. Sulaimān b. Qarā Arslān Ġāzī b. Qutalmiš b. Isrāʾīl b. Salğūq—may God extend the shadow of his state to the East and the West. ... the victorious sultan and the great man of his age Abū al-Faṭḥ Kai Ḥusrau—may God make his state everlasting—may study and understand that the embellishment of angels is praising and exulting God, the embellishment of prophets knowledge and worship, and the embellishment of kings justice and administration.⁸⁴

This lower degree of hierarchical systematization allowed nevertheless for an efficient way of organizing the contents because in both compilations the arrangement of the presented data (*ordo materiae*) can be explicated as topical (*ordo rerum*) as well as systematic (*ordo artium*).⁸⁵ The topical and the systematic arrangement differ as to how they mediate knowledge, although both aim at providing the reader with a comprehensive representation of the cosmos, or at least parts thereof, understood as a mimetic copy (*imago*) or a mirror (*speculum*).⁸⁶ The **topical** arrangement constructs an order of the data

84. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: “u-ğaraḍ azīn mağmūʿe dīkr-i alqāb u-nām u-nasab-i šarīf-i pādīšāh-i ʿādil u-sultān-i qāhir ... Abū al-Faṭḥ Kaiḥusrau b. Qiliğ Arslān b. Masʿūd b. Qiliğ Arslān b. Sulaimān b. Qarā Arslān Ġāzī b. Qutalmiš b. Isrāʾīl b. Salğūq madda Allāh ʿalā al-ḥāfiqain ḡill daulati-hī ast ... sultān-i qāhir u-ʿazīm al-dahr Kaiḥusrau ḡallada Allāh daulata-hī muṭālaʿat farmāyad u-bidānad ke ḡilyat-i malāʾike tasbīḥ u-tahlīl ast u-ḡilyat-i anbiyā ʿilm u-ʿibādat u-ḡilyat-i mulūk ʿadl u-siyāsāt.” (64–65).

85. For a concise description of *ordo rerum* and *ordo artium* as concepts of classification, see: Christel Meier in Binkley, *Pre-modern Encyclopaedic Texts*: 104–111; compare: Wolfgang Kemp in Haverkamp and Lachmann, *Memoria*: “diesen beiden Memorierungsstrategien: Thema und Schema” (273).

86. Christel Meier in Keller, *Pragmatische Schriftlichkeit*: “einer Gegenüberstellung der älteren Totalitätsvorstellung in der Abbildung des *ordo rerum* und der neueren der Vermittlung der Welt durch den *ordo artium*” (157 note 5).

themselves, beginning with **the question of what** the phenomena are within the world.⁸⁷

But the **systematic** arrangement gives access to data about the cosmos through the gateways of the established disciplines and their sciences, starting with **the question of how** any knowledge about the phenomena of the world can be obtained. Both arrangements are analytical as well as synthetic because every comprehensive representation of phenomena depends on analytical decisions about the hierarchical relationships among the data to construct their synthetic order. In the *Muḥāḍarāt* and the *Rāḥat*, the linear sequences of components can be analyzed as associative chains of either topics (*ordo rerum*) or disciplines (*ordo artium*) that in turn produce syntheses of literary Arabic and Seljuq politics, respectively.

87. For how the topical arrangement combines associative chains (*Sachgruppenordnung*) with arguments, see: Wolfgang Kemp in Haverkamp and Lachmann, *Memoria*: “Die Memorierbarkeit und die Eindrücklichkeit dieser Werke ist eine Funktion der divisio, sie müssen nicht den Weg der antiken Mnemotechnik nehmen und erst Bilder und dann räumliche Anordnung werden. Was thematische Predigt und philosophischen Lehrgegenstand anbetrifft, so können sie das auch gar nicht: sie verweigern sich einer Umwandlung in metaphorica. Sie sind weniger fallbezogen als argumentativ.” (276); and “es [geht] dem Philosophen [i.e., Thomas von Aquin] und seinen Schülern nicht um eine Ordnung im Sinne von vorausgehender Strukturierung und Programmierung, sondern um ein assoziations-theoretisches Konzept von Zuordnung und Vorstellungsreihe” (277).

Table 15. The topical arrangement of the *Muḥāḍarāt*.

Nature of knowledge	1	Reason, knowledge, and ignorance
Official power	2	Rule
Official relations between men	3	Justice, injustice, and clemency
	4	Support, loyalty, and betrayal
Private relations between kin	5	Paternity, filiation, and kin
	6	Gratitude and slander
Business relations between men	7	Ambitions
	8	Professions and poverty
	9	Giftgiving and begging
Private relations between men	10	Foods
	11	Drinking
	12	Brotherhoods
	13	Love
	14	Courage
	15	Marriage
	16	Humor
Congenital human features	17	Human physiognomy
Created human accessories	18	Clothes and bedding
Faith	19	Censure of this world
	20	Denominations and observances
	21	Death
Non-human environment	22	Heaven, places, and plants
	23	Angels and spirits
	24	Animals
Catchall	25	Miscellanea

Table 16. The systematic arrangement of the *Muḥāḍarāt*.

I	EPISTEMOLOGY	
<i>Nature of knowledge</i>	1	Reason, knowledge, and ignorance
II	ETHICS	
<i>Official power</i>	2	Rule
<i>Official relations between men</i>	3	Justice, injustice, and clemency
	4	Support, loyalty, and betrayal
<i>Private relations between kin</i>	5	Paternity, filiation, and kin
	6	Gratitude and slander
<i>Business relations between men</i>	7	Ambitions
	8	Professions and poverty
	9	Giftgiving and begging
<i>Private relations between men</i>	10	Foods
	11	Drinking
	12	Brotherhoods
	13	Love
	14	Courage
	15	Marriage
	16	Humor
<i>Congenital human features</i>	17	Human physiognomy
<i>Created human accessories</i>	18	Clothes and bedding
III	THEOLOGY	
<i>Faith</i>	19	Censure of this world
	20	Denominations and observances
	21	Death
IV	COSMOGRAPHY	
<i>Non-human environment</i>	22	Heaven, places, and plants
	23	Angels and spirits
	24	Animals
V	—	
<i>Catchall</i>	25	Miscellanea

Table 17. The topical arrangement of the *Rāḥat*.**Justice** (ʿadl u-sitāyiš-i insāf)**Sultanate of the Great Seljuqs** (tārīḥ-hā u-šiʿr-hā) The beginning of the Seljuq sultanate

Ṭuġril I
 Alb Arslān
 Malik Šāh I
 Barkiyāruq
 Muḥammad I
 Saṅġar
 Maḥmūd II
 Ṭuġril II
 Masʿūd
 Malik Šāh III
 Muḥammad II
 Sulaimān
 Arslān
 Ṭuġril III
 The conquest of the Khwarazm Shahs

Skills expected of rulers (faṣl-hā-yi mušbiʿ)***Behavior in groups***

Boon companions and board games

Physical fitness

Wine
 Horse racing and archery
 Hunting

Administration

Calligraphy
 Numerical divination

Table 18. The systematic arrangement *Rāḥat*.**I.1 ETHICS***Justice* (ʿadl u-sitāyiš-i insāf)**I.2 APPLIED ETHICS I: POLITICS***Sultanate of the Great Seljuqs* (tārīḥ-hā u-šīʿr-hā)

The beginning of the Seljuq sultanate
 Ṭuġril I
 Alb Arslān
 Malik Šāh I
 Barkiyāruq
 Muḥammad I
 Saṅġar
 Maḥmūd II
 Ṭuġril II
 Masʿūd
 Malik Šāh III
 Muḥammad II
 Sulaimān
 Arslān
 Ṭuġril III
 The conquest of the Khwarazm Shahs

I.3 APPLIED ETHICS II: COURTLY ETIQUETTE*Skills expected of rulers* (faṣl-hā-yi mušbiʿ)

Behavior in groups

Boon companions and board games
 Wine

Physical fitness

Horse racing and archery
 Hunting

II LITERACY

Administration

Calligraphy
 Numerical divination

That the linear sequence of parts, chapters, or sections in both the *Muḥāḍarāt* and the *Rāḥat* can be interpreted as topical as well as systematic arrangement constitutes an arresting difference between these Middle-Eastern compilations and their medieval European counterparts. In the Latin West, the distinction between topical and systematic arrangements allows for the documentation of how in comprehensive compilations the classification of data changed in the thirteen century, marking the shift from a predominantly cosmological perspective to a more anthropocentric viewpoint. The *Speculum maius* (c.1256–1259) by Vincent of Beauvais and the *Trésor* (c.1260–1270) by Brunetto Latini illustrate that authors usually organized the contents of compilations either as *ordo rerum* or as *ordo artium*.⁸⁸ The already mentioned contemporaneous developments in the classification of literary excerpts in Latin anthologies are another example of the growing influence of the *artes* and their concrete educational goals on the compilation of textbooks. The practical needs of *ars dictaminis* and *artes praecandi*, for example, are reflected in subsuming the riches of exemplary quotations under a sequence of subject matters. The concept of an explicit canon of authoritative works is abandoned in favor of how to apply that which a discipline teaches its students. This observation raises the question of how to explain that Rāḡib and Rāwandī designed the contents of their compilations in a manner that privileged the subject matters while downplaying their implicit topical and systematic arrangements. It is deplorable that due to the lack of research this question cannot be answered. On the one hand, the *Muḥāḍarāt* and the

88. For manuscripts and editions of both compilations, see: Twomey, “Medieval Encyclopedias”: 198–199 (Vincent of Beauvais) and 209–211 (Brunetto Latini). For the intellectual context for the European transition from *ordo rerum* to *ordo artium*, see: Meier, “COSMOS POLITICUS”: 315–334; compare: Christel Meier in Keller, *Pragmatische Schriftlichkeit*: 166–175.

Rāḥat cannot be contextualized within the history of Arabic and Persian compilations since the eighth century. On the other hand, the arrangement of their contents cannot be compared to how, in compilations, the organization of contents developed over time.⁸⁹ But asking this question is constructive because it illustrates again the lack of research on medieval Arabic and Persian literature, and serves as reminder that Rāḡib and Rāwandī designed their compilations for literate audiences already familiar with anthologies and miscellanies. Readers can be expected to know the organization of works that comply with the conventions of well-established literary genres so that authors can spare themselves detailed explanations, instructions, and surveys of contents. Seen against this background it becomes much less astonishing that in both compilations the authors did not utilize either of these inherent concepts of order to provide an orientation device, although topical and systematic arrangements were well-established means of memorization, and thus facilitated orientation. Nor did either author represent the conception of his compilation in a diagram, visualizing the arrangement of its contents.⁹⁰

The juxtaposition of topical and systematic arrangements reveals that the *Muḥāḍarāt* and the *Rāḥat* share another characteristic that is not evident within the linear sequence of their components: The first chapter serves two functions because it identifies the respective educational goal that in turn unites the diverse components of the work,

89. For a first thematic exploration of Arabic anthologies, see: Rosenthal, *Knowledge Triumphant*: 252–277 (*ilm*); and Rowson, “Categorization of Gender” (*muḡūn* or *suḥf*).

90. On diagrams as a means for the visual representation of knowledge as well as mnemonic device, see: Renate Lachmann in Haverkamp and Lachmann, *Memoria*: XXII–XXIV. For the development of such diagrams, following the emergence of new metaphors for the organization of knowledge, between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries in western Europe, compare: Burke, *Social History*: 81–115, and especially the examples 87 fig.5, 88–89 fig.6, 97 fig.7, and 98 fig.8.

transforming them into a cohesive whole. Rāḡib argued in his introduction that an intelligent man studies the heritage of literary Arabic because his mind's performance is the combination of an innate potential with acquired knowledge.⁹¹ In the first chapter, he assembled excerpts about the relationship between reason, ignorance, and knowledge.⁹² Rāwandī, in contrast, explored in the first chapter how the powers that be—God, Iranian kings, caliphs, and other notables—were meting out justice.⁹³ He sampled instances of just behavior in prose and verse to illustrate for his dedicatee Kai Ḥusrau that the reconstitution of just Seljuq rule over western Iran behooved a just Seljuq sultan.⁹⁴ Although the first chapter identifies an educational goal, it is neither a statement of teaching philosophy nor a manual for how to use the compilation for self-study.⁹⁵ Their first chapters do not give instructions, neither for how to stimulate critical thinking through improving verbal skills nor for how to ingrain a sense of justice. The *Muḥāḍarāt*

91. Rāḡib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ed. Beirut: “wa-man lā yatatabba‘u ṭarafan min al-faḍā’il al-muḥallada ‘an alsinat al-awā’il fa-l-‘aql nau‘ān maṭbū‘ wa-masmū‘ wa-lā yaṣlahu aḥadu-humā illā bi-l-āḥir” *Whoever does not pursue exquisite qualities among the excellent ones that were eternalized by the ancestors’ sayings, lacks reason. Reason is of two kinds: inborn and that which has been learned by ear, and each of the two only thrives in connection with the other.* (1: 8).

92. Rāḡib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ed. Beirut, 1: 13–155. For a summary of the first chapter with a focus on Rāḡib’s understanding of knowledge (‘ilm), see: Rosenthal, *Knowledge Triumphant*: 270–272.

93. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: 68–84.

94. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: “iftitāḥ bi-‘adl kardam ke sīrat-i pādīšāh-i ‘adl Ġiyāṭ al-Dīn ast u-dar har daurī ‘amārat-i ḡahān u-amn-i ‘ālamīyān az ‘adl būde ast” *I begin with justice that is the character of the just monarch Ġiyāṭ al-Dīn. In every age the prosperity of the world and the security of men results from justice.* (68).

95. Rosenthal, *Knowledge Triumphant*: “Encyclopedias, too, devote hardly ever any space to the theoretical problems of knowledge or consider it necessary to enter into extended discussion of the praiseworthy qualities of knowledge.” (254). There exists, however, Arabic and Persian writings on pedagogy that originated within the fields of religious and philosophical education, and which needs to be distinguished from textbooks with teaching material: “The technical educational literature ... deals with the practical aspects of how to acquire and spread knowledge. It does not require any theoretical discussion of what knowledge is.” (283).

and the *Rāḥat* are not treatises on the technical aspects of education, such as pedagogy and didactics;⁹⁶ they are textbooks filled with that which is necessary and worthwhile knowing. The detailed description of the educational goal in the first chapter allows the reader to perceive the following parts, chapters, or sections through the lens of the respective educational goal. This double function of the first chapter offers an explanation as to why the paratactic sequence with its initially dazzling diversity of data successfully functioned as a gateway to the contents. After the introduction and the first chapter the reader knows that the compiled excerpts have been selected with respect to a clearly identified educational goal, so that an associative chain is sufficient to arrange the data while an additional layer of hierarchy does not seem to improve how efficiently the reader can navigate the wealth of collected material. For the more complex the hierarchal arrangement of data, the more complex the process of retrieving information. Today, very long paratactic sequences in an alphabetical order are used because of their efficiency for the arrangement of entries in contemporary dictionaries and multi-volume encyclopedias, such as *Webster's Third New International Dictionary* or the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

IV. d . **The spoken word: Arabic and the *umma***

Rāḡib described the *Muḥāḍarāt* as an anthology with which the reader enhanced his

96. For Arabic literature on religious and philosophical education, see: Rosenthal, *Knowledge Triumphant*: 277–298, compare 252–253. But Rosenthal subsumed anthologies under belles-lettres (*adab*), whereas he treated encyclopedias and mirrors for princes (*Fürstenspiegel*) as educational literature. That the two textbooks contain neither a section on pedagogy nor a theoretical discussion of subject and methodologies allowed for classifying the *Muḥāḍarāt* and the *Rāḥat* as bad belles-lettres and bad historiography, respectively.

active grasp of literary Arabic, situating his compilation within the a well-established tradition of written anthologies of literary Arabic in prose and in verse. Rāḡib, however, did not relate the practical linguistic benefits of his anthology to specific societal contexts in which his textbook would find a buying audience, inasmuch as it addressed their demand for the acquisition of Arabic language skills. His silence conspicuously corresponds to the dearth of information about the socioeconomic context in which Rāḡib compiled the anthology, since neither Rāḡib nor the *Muḥāḍarāt* can be placed into a specific historical context toward the end of the tenth and the beginning of the eleventh century in western Iran. The compilation and circulation of Latin anthologies within the context of *ars dictaminis* and *artes praecandi* demonstrate that the teaching of good Latin was limited to certain segments of the medieval European societies in which vernaculars had already entered the spheres of sacred and secular written literatures through Bible translations on the one hand and poetry and epics on the other.⁹⁷ Yet the already examined evidence for the transmission of the *Muḥāḍarāt* proves that the anthology has stayed in circulation between Tehran and Istanbul as a popular, affordable textbook. Even though there is no research to compare the reception of the *Muḥāḍarāt* to that of a comparable Arabic compilation, a solid knowledge of literary Arabic was considered a valuable asset even outside the smaller groups of professionals for whom the acquisition

97. For the uses of Latin anthologies, see the considerations about the *Florilegium Angelicum* by Rouse and Rouse, *Authentic Witnesses*: “the compiler’s purpose was to provide a collection of elegant quotations, from which one might draw apt and stylish phrases for the composition of public pronouncements and official letters.” (110); and “The *florilegium* is a reference book for discourse, for the writers of business letters. ... The *florilegium* permits one to give advice, support arguments, state conclusions, in the eloquent language of famous men of letters.” (124); compare also: 124–127, 155, and 186–188.

of Arabic was the propaedeutic for a career in jurisprudence, theology, philosophy, or the sciences. While Rāḡib's sales pitch drew on the personal advantages that follow from being fluent in literary Arabic, in the introduction he did not dwell on the professional gains of good Arabic language skills. Nor did he utilize the well-established topos of stemming the decline of civilization that was foreshadowed in the corruption of formal language through the rise of argot, jargon, or slang.⁹⁸

Rāḡib used the terms *muḥāḍara* and *muḥāwara* in the title,⁹⁹ and the phrase *fī maḡlis al-lahw* in the introduction,¹⁰⁰ to refer to conversations and gatherings. Although he compiled the *Muḥāḍarāt* as a textbook of literary Arabic, the paucity of data for the socioeconomic context of the anthology raises the question of how to interpret these references to social occasions of language use. The difficulties of placing Rāḡib and his anthology into a concrete historical context are compounded by the selected excerpts because they do not betray any dogmatic stance and do not include material surely datable after the mid tenth century. The sources of the citations that are neither Koran verses nor *ḥadīth* are given in very general terms as far as necessary, so that the reader can link the prose and verse samples to a famous man, an authoritative discourse of learned men, or common knowledge and folklore. The short anecdotes do not provide verifiable

98. See, for example, R.W. Burchfield's remarks about the alleged decline on standard English in Fowler, *Modern English Usage*: xi–xii.

99. Lane: 589 s.v. ḥāḍartu-hū, and 665 s.v. ḥāwara-hū. For the thesis that the *Muḥāḍarāt* is an anthology of apt quotables (*muḥāḍarāt*), see above, chapter II, notes 127-128.

100. Rāḡib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ed. Beirut: "at a get-together" (1: 8); compare: Lane: 444 s.v. maḡlis.

functional data; their heroes are stock characters, such as the bedouin A^crābī,¹⁰¹ and almost legendary historical personalities, such as ʿUmar b. al-Ḥaṭṭab (ruled 634–644) and Hārūn al-Rašīd (ruled 786–809). These observations suggest that Rāḡib designed the *Muḥāḍarāt* as a prescriptive encyclopedia of the Arab-Islamic written literary tradition that emerged toward the end of the seventh century, and which was canonized by the beginning of the tenth. The compiled material is exemplary, though unlikely to reflect the Arabic that was spoken in western Iran toward the late tenth and the early eleventh century. The anthology is committed to the highly pragmatic purpose of improving its reader’s language skills, while presenting its contents as being far removed from contemporary politics and dogmatic strife.

How convincingly the *Muḥāḍarāt* combines these seemingly contradictory features to realize Rāḡib’s pedagogical intentions is documented by Thomas’s decision to interpret the terms *muḥāḍara* and *muḥāwara* literally. She described the *Muḥāḍarāt* as “a corrective to a breakdown of linguistic performance,” arguing that its “pragmatic approach ... was reflected in the work’s main characteristics: the primarily snippet-length entries (for easy insertion into conversation).”¹⁰² Her sociolinguistic approach does not

101. Rāḡib’s treatment of the bedouin in the *Muḥāḍarāt*’s tenth chapter about foods is the major source for Sadan, “Admirable and Ridiculous Hero.”

102. Thomas, “Concept of *Muḥāḍara*”: 240, compare 18–19 and 165–167. Her approach is informed by an analysis of the relationship between rough nomads and sophisticated city dwellers; see Sadan, “Admirable and Ridiculous Hero”: “On the one hand, the book offers the intellectuals (*udabāʾ*) information, anecdotes, scholarly curiosities, and stories which help them with their conversations. On the other hand, the written *adab* draws on what is transmitted in the oral *adab*, as well as in other sources. ... each form provides the other with material. It is a rather unique phenomenon, because it does not consist of the usual relationship between oral and written forms, involving the oppositions popular versus literary, canonical versus noncanonical.” (472); compare 484–485; and Sadan, “Hārūn al-Rāshīd”: 3–4. Sadan privileged writing to utilize a relationship between written source and oral discourse within the framework of social history. To mine the *Muḥāḍarāt* for data about the relationship between Arab bedouins and the Islamic city,

address the perennial problem of how to bridge, after the fall from grace into literacy, the abyss between speaking and listening, on the one hand, and writing and reading, on the other. Instead, she juxtaposed speech and writing as separate spheres of linguistic performance,¹⁰³ while downplaying the roles of script and literacy to allow for the eternal superiority of speech in medieval Islamic societies.¹⁰⁴ That more than five centuries after Rāḡib the Ottoman scholar Taşköprüzade hailed the *Muḥāḍarāt* as an Arabic textbook is central to Thomas's argument that spoken Arabic lies at the heart of Rāḡib's conception of the *Muḥāḍarāt*. Nonetheless, she did not examine why Taşköprüzade appreciated the anthology. Nor did she explain the applicability of a written corpus of Arabic excerpts, most of which originated before the tenth century, to conversations in Arabic in the polyglot communities of sixteenth-century Istanbul.¹⁰⁵ Thomas did not ask why the contents of the anthology was not adjusted to the changing linguistic realities, if how to speak a better Arabic was the focus of the *Muḥāḍarāt*.

It is extraordinary, given its uninterrupted circulation since the eleventh century, that the text of the *Muḥāḍarāt* has never been fundamentally revised. Limited

he argued that in aesthetic texts the mention of non-sophisticated men, such as Arab bedouins, directly reflects social reality. The underlying assumption is based on the axiom that poverty, baseness, vulgarity, and so forth are beyond aesthetic transformation so that texts about these topics have the status of written documents of an oral discourse and can be taken at face value.

103. Thomas, "Concept of *Muḥāḍara*": "When and precisely how this standard [i.e., a fine epistolary style ... documented in the manuals of secretaries] was applied to the medium of speech, and in particular, to the literary conversations of the *majālis*, is hard to say." (33–34); compare "in classical Arabic society ... a permeable membrane ... between adab society and its literature, with both sources for each other." (18–19).

104. Thomas, "Concept of *Muḥāḍara*": "the semiliterate, yet highly logophilic, culture of the medieval Near East in which eloquent and persuasive speech was a potent and material means, not merely a serendipitous accessory." (101).

105. Thomas, "Concept of *Muḥāḍara*": 22–98, especially 46–49 (Ottoman contribution to *‘ilm al-muḥāḍara*), 49–74 (Taşköprüzade), and 74–78 (Katip Çelebi).

experiments with the contents of the anthology attest that Rāḡib succeeded at being as succinct as necessary while covering as much of the literary tradition as possible. Even though the anthology was repeatedly abridged, as discussed in the second chapter, I have found no enlarged versions. Nor have I found in the examined manuscripts and imprints any evidence for changes in the chapter sequence.¹⁰⁶ This stability is at least in part an effect of Rāḡib's numbering of the chapters, which facilitated the preservation of the paratactic order of the anthology as the backbone of its thematic grid of sections and rubrics. The *Muḥāḡarāt* fragment in Halle (Saale) shows, for example, how an incomplete Mamluk manuscript could be converted into an Ottoman abridgment of the last nine chapters, to be sold without the addition of an introduction or an updated survey of contents.¹⁰⁷ At the beginning of the twentieth century, Zaidān condensed the anthology to a slim volume, preserving the sequence of the first thirteen chapters.¹⁰⁸ He designed his abridgment in the style of contemporary French books, deleting the survey of contents from the introduction and replacing it with a paginated and adjusted table of contents that follows the text.

106. Compare, for example, the *Muḥāḡarāt*'s chapter sequence in Flügel, *Handschriften*, 1: 341–342 s.v. 369; Ahlwardt, *Verzeichnis*, 7: 329–331 s.v. 8346; Rāḡib, *Muḥāḡarāt*, ed. Beirut, 1: 8–11; and Rāḡib, *Nawādir*: ḡīm–ḡā'. Only in Ahlwardt's catalogue does the chapter about bravery follow the chapter about love; in other words, the order of the thirteen and fourteenth chapter is reversed. The close agreement between the two Arabic manuscripts, the Beirut edition, and the Persian translation is otherwise not limited to the chapter sequence, and extends to the division of the chapters into sections.

107. Halle (Saale), Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek Sachsen-Anhalt – Deutsche Morgenländische Gesellschaft, MS arab. 116; see above, chapter II, note 90.

108. Rāḡib, *Muḥāḡarāt*, ed. Zaidān. Zaidān completely deleted the tenth chapter about foods, so that he counted the chapter about love as his twelfth chapter; see above, chapter II, note 55. Unfortunately, Zaidān did not mention the sources of his abridgment because, theoretically, he could have relied on a manuscript from which the tenth chapter was missing.

The overall stability in the transmission of the *Muḥāḍarāt*'s text becomes less surprising if the anthology is not considered as a textbook of tenth- or eleventh-century spoken Arabic. Nineteenth-century editors of abridged imprints of the *Kitab al-aḡānī* still argued, for example, that studying this tenth-century anthology of songs would improve their reader's understanding of the semantic and stylistic subtleties of literary Arabic.¹⁰⁹ There is little reason to update a compilation, if its contents were never understood as the representation of a current linguistic reality.¹¹⁰ But the conservatism indicated by the *Muḥāḍarāt*'s reception does not directly support the thesis of the steady decline of the Arab-Islamic civilization, the onset of which is usually perceived to have accompanied the weakening of the Abbasid caliphate during the eleventh century. The chasm between the world captured between the covers of a textbook and a reader's daily life is not unique to Middle-Eastern compilations. Their medieval European counterparts were designed as *imago mundi* and *speculum mundi*, yet the contemporary reality of their authors was usually excluded from these guides to a better understanding of God's world.¹¹¹ That the *Muḥāḍarāt* remained in demand is therefore not sufficiently explained with the appeal of a mediocre anthology to conservative audiences in intellectually stagnant societies.

The riches of preserved Islamic manuscripts testify to the value and prestige that medieval Islamic civilization placed on books, even though the actual reach of reading

109. Kilpatrick, *Making the Great Book of Songs*: 5–6.

110. For the explicit focus on already canonized material, see: Rāḡib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ed. Beirut: “wa-man lā yatatabba‘u ṭurafan min al-faḍā’il al-muḥallada ‘an alsinat al-awā’il” *Whoever does not pursue exquisite qualities among the excellent ones that were eternalized by the ancestors’ sayings, lacks reason.* (1: 8).

111. Meier, “Grundzüge”: “die mittelalterliche Enzyklopädie [hat] kaum je die jeweils zeitgenössische Welt abgebildet” (488); and “Daran hat die Forschung wiederholt Anstoß genommen.” (499 note 116).

and writing skills in premodern Islamic societies is still a matter of conjecture and guesswork. The relatively late imposition of Arabic as the sole administrative language of the Umayyad caliphate after 698, as well as the rise of literary Persian under the patronage of the Sāmānids in the tenth century, evoke an environment in which language policies were not based on the modern western notion of the nation state: one language, one people, one territory. The active mastery of certain languages and their literary traditions was indispensable for specific professions and careers, but there was no legislation that regulated which languages individuals spoke in their private lives.¹¹² The example of western Europe illustrates that the pedagogical faith in textbooks, manuals, and so forth is characteristic of literate societies with flourishing book markets.¹¹³ However, direct references to conversations in book titles do not necessarily attest to the supremacy of the spoken word. The nineteenth-century *Konversationslexikon* advertised itself, like the *Muḥāḍarāt*, as a book that comes in handy whenever citizens speak with each other.¹¹⁴ The bulky *Konversationslexikon*—for instance, the ten volumes of

112. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*: “the old administrative languages were *just that*: languages used by and for officialdoms for their own inner convenience. There was no idea of systematically imposing the language on the dynasts’ various subject populations.” (42).

113. Burke, *Social History*: 109–110 and 115.

114. Fuhrmann, *Bildungskanon*: “der Begriff ›Konversation‹ im Titel dieses Typus von Lexika [muß] ernst genommen werden, ... es [ging] dabei um Austausch im Bereich der Bildung, um Geselligkeit außerhalb beruflicher und geschäftlicher Zwecke, und um das bürgerliche Prinzip, auf gleichem Fuße miteinander umzugehen. Salons und Lesezirkel waren allerorten in Mode, und für all das, worüber dort geredet wurde, stand das Lexikon als Reservoir des Wißbaren bereit.” (111); compare Gerhart von Graevenitz in Haverkamp and Lachmann, *Memoria*: 285 and 287; and Beetz, “Komplimentierbuch.” For the strikingly similar definition of society as men talking with each other at social gatherings or public places, see this passage in which Rāḡib compared linguistic minimalism with the rational ethics of ambition: Rāḡib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ed. Beirut: “wa-man yatallaḥā fī maḡlis al-lahw illā bi-maʿrifat al-luḡa wa-l-naḥw kāna min al-ḥuḍḍar sūratān mumattilatān au bahīmatān muḥmilatān wa-man lā yatatabbaʿu ṭarafān min al-fadāʾil al-muḥallada ʿan alsinat al-awāʾil” *Whoever is at a get-together only adorned with the knowledge of lexicography and grammar, is a puppet or a beast among those socializing. Whoever does not pursue*

Chamber's Encyclopaedia (1860–1868) or the fifteen volumes of the *Larousse: Grand dictionnaire universel* (1864–1876)—demonstrates further that using reference books to improve conversations among equals must not be literally conceived as flipping through the pages of multiple volumes while talking to strangers at a party. The acquisition of language skills or knowledge must be distinguished from their practical application, even though learning-while-doing can and does occur all the time. In Islamic concepts of the transmission of knowledge, orality is privileged, so that, conversely, reading and writing are presented as auxiliaries of learning and education.¹¹⁵ It is the personal encounter between teacher and student that allows for the direct and oral transmission of true and authoritative knowledge, whereas writing and reading are necessary only to grant and verify *iğāzas* and to preserve *isnāds*, producing written proof for the oral exchange of knowledge.¹¹⁶ Rāḡib's references to learned conversation and witty debate do not identify the *Muḥāḍarāt* as an advanced learner's phrase book of spoken Arabic. On the contrary. They reflect orality as an epistemological principle and indicate an Islamic identity that

exquisite qualities among the excellent ones that were eternalized by the ancestors' sayings, lacks reason. (1: 8); for a different translation, compare: Thomas, "Concept of *Muḥāḍara*": 166 note 29. She proposes to read "šūratān mumattalatān aw bahīmatān muḥmalatān" and translates accordingly "a 'stuffed shirt' or an unsupervised beast." My translation of "a puppet or a beast" is derived from the literal, though clumsy "an acting image or a negligent quadruped."

115. Messick, *Calligraphic State*: "Reading and writing figure importantly in the instructional activity of *darasa*. At the same time, however, their roles were systematically kept in the background while oral dimensions of the same complex were placed in the foreground. This culturally specific devaluation and valuation of the respective roles of written and oral communication was integral to the larger theory of transmission upon which the legitimacy of knowledge hinged." (90). Compare: Bulliet, *Islam*: "The system of preserving and transmitting religious lore was an oral tradition, not a memory tradition. Though many *ḥadīth* transmitters did commit to memory the texts and the *isnads* they pronounced in their classes, their students usually wrote down every *ḥadīth* verbatim, including the *isnad*." (14).

116. Wilfried Barner in Herzog and Koselleck, *Epochenschwelle*: "'Reine Form' ist die mündliche Weitergabe sakralen Wissens (als Zeugnischaft, Katachese usw.), aber auch, als diachron-personale Kontinuitätsbedingung, die successio der geistlichen Funktionsträger." (13 note 56).

imagines an *umma* in which a solid grasp of literary Arabic is indispensable for Arabs and non-Arabs alike.

IV. e. The written word: Persian and an Islamic court

The *Muḥāḍarāt* raises the question of the concrete purposes for which Muslims between Tehran and Istanbul continued to familiarize themselves with the literary Arabic tradition when they decided to study the anthology between the eleventh and twentieth centuries. The *Rāḥat*, in contrast, is so carefully tailored to its Rum Seljuq dedicatee that the miscellany raises the question of why anyone but Kai Ḥusrau should bother to read it. This juxtaposition illustrates that, even though both authors labored in obscurity in west-Iranian cities before the Mongol conquest, they composed their compilations for very different target audiences. The unspecific socioeconomic context of the *Muḥāḍarāt* allows only for general considerations about Rāḡib's references to spoken Arabic, yet the foregrounding of an oral practice in the Arabic anthology directs attention to the calligraphy chapter in the *Rāḥat*. There is a stark contrast between allusions to learned conversation in an anthology of literary Arabic and Rāwandī's hands-on instructions in Persian for the execution of Arabic letters according to the concept of proportionate script (*al-ḥatt al-mansūb*).¹¹⁷ It is one of the stranger aspects of the reception of the *Rāḥat* among nineteenth- and twentieth-century scholars that Schefer, Iqbāl, Morton, Hillenbrand, and Meisami did not acknowledge that, whatever the literary and historical value of the miscellany, its thirteenth-century manuscript is a principal source for the

117. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: 437–447.

development of Arabic calligraphy.¹¹⁸ Iqbāl did not even retain the sketches that show the proportionality of the letter shapes in the unique manuscript,¹¹⁹ keeping in the critical edition only the sketches and tables from the chapters about board games and numerical divination.¹²⁰

In his autobiographical statement Rāwandī presented himself as thoroughly trained in both theology and the arts of the book, so that his inclusion of a chapter about calligraphy served to demonstrate his professional accomplishments. Although his remarks on calligraphy might betray a personal bias, the inclusion of this chapter reflects that there was a marketplace for sophisticated writing skills, and thus that calligraphy was one of the bread-and-butter occupations of learned men. Every scholar whom Rāwandī mentioned as teacher, mentor, or friend in his autobiographical statement was a calligrapher as well as a scholar. His maternal uncle Zain al-Dīn was a tutor of the Great Seljuq sultan Ṭuḡril III, and as such he was also occupied with the manufacture of secular and sacred books in the court workshop of Ṭuḡril III. The range of Zain al-Dīn's work for Ṭuḡril III documents that our contemporary academic distinction between mere handicrafts and prestigious intellectual occupations was as irrelevant to Rāwandī as the distinction between sacred and secular knowledge. On the one hand, a learned man could

118. For the self-confident announcement that his chapter about calligraphy would reveal previously undiscussed secrets, see: Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: “u-dar ʿilm-i ḥaṭṭ asrārī čand ke tā īn gāyat kas iẓhār ān nakarde ast faṣlī mušbiʿ bigūyam naẓman wa-naṭran” *With regard to the knowledge of calligraphy, let me talk for a full chapter in verse and prose about some secrets which no one has explained to this extent.* (63).

119. See above, chapter II, note 187.

120. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: 409, 410, 411, 413, 450, 451, and 457; compare XXVI–XXIX for Iqbāl's comments on these three chapters. It is ironic that Iqbāl included sketches from the chapter about board games, since he considered it derivative. Otherwise, he found the calligraphy chapter interesting, but was much more intrigued by the chapter about numerical divination.

wear many hats: instructor of theology, compiler of an anthology of poetry, and calligrapher. On the other hand, even though a sultan might be blamed for neglecting his duties on the battlefield, an appreciation for calligraphy behooved a noble Islamic ruler. The chapter about *al-ḥaṭṭ al-mansūb* distinguishes Rāwandī's approach to calligraphy from Rāḡib's treatment of reading and writing in *Muḥāḍarāt*, because its sections on secretaryship, spelling mistakes, and writing instruments are purely non-technical, providing excerpts about recitation and the value of books but no concrete instructions for how to execute a script.¹²¹

No political or technological reasons can be assumed to have triggered a decisive change in the spread of literacy in western Iran, a change that would have caused new societal attitudes toward calligraphy between the time of Rāḡib and that of Rāwandī. Since Rāḡib and Rāwandī did not cover the same fields of knowledge in their compilations, their different treatment of calligraphy indicates that artistic writing skills did not belong to the fundamentals of every field of knowledge. Neither the *Muḥāḍarāt* nor Rāḡib's official biography contain any reference as to whether this author of dictionaries and philosophical treatises was trained in calligraphy. The scholars who later included an entry about Rāḡib in their reference works displayed no interest in this particular detail. But Rāwandī's approach to calligraphy suggests that elite audiences with the necessary financial resources valued writing skills not only for strictly educational, administrative, or legal purposes. The connoisseurship of calligraphy and

121. Rāḡib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ed. Beirut, 1: 96–106 (scribes and secretaryship), 106–111 (misplacement of diacritical marks), and 111–120 (writing instruments); the three sections are in the first chapter of the anthology.

the commodity status of books went hand in hand. Rāwandī's remarks about book projects and book owners manuscripts provide glimpses of the book culture at the Great Seljuq court.¹²² Despite his grief over the death of the last Great Seljuq sultan, Rāwandī kept an eye on the whereabouts of certain books. Moreover, he presumed that toward the end of the first decade of the thirteenth century the Rum Seljuq sultan Kai Ḥusrau in Konya cared about the destiny of manuscripts that were manufactured in the 1180s in Hamadan under the patronage of Ṭuḡril III. The identification of exceptional Koran manuscripts and an illustrated anthology of poetry in a miscellany that was dedicated to a reader outside western Iran raises the question of how fast news about books traveled among the members of various dynasties. The tracking of these manuscripts is even more remarkable, when seen against the background of the conquest of the Khwarazm Shahs late in the twelfth century.

In addition to the practical chapter on calligraphy, Rāwandī made copious allusions to script and writing, and his miscellany appears to be steeped in a literary tradition that placed a premium on the written word. He relied mostly on written sources.¹²³ He wrote the *Rāḥat* in Persian, since the Turkish Seljuqs had followed in the footsteps of other Turkish dynasties by choosing Persian as their administrative language.

122. For the thesis that coffee-table books of high artistic quality and books for religious education were the two principal types of books manufactured in premodern Islamic societies before the rise of an urban middle class in Ottoman Cairo, see: Hanna, *Praise of Books*: 80.

123. For the observation that Rāwandī rarely gave credit to the oral transmission of knowledge, see: Cahen, "Historiography": 74 note 71; compare: Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: "šanīdam ke čūn sultān Ṭuḡril Bik bi-Hamadān āmad" (98 line 15); "amm-i īšān Mūsā b. Salḡūq ke ū-rā Yabḡū Kalān guftandī" (102 lines 6-7); "šanīdam ke Ṭuḡril Bik tīrī bi-barādar dād" (102 lines 8-9); "čūn dīkr-i 'aḡamat u-saltānat-i ḡudāwand-i 'ālam ... bišanīd" (462 line 22–463 line 3), and passim.

In the miscellany he endowed a pre-Islamic concept of Iranian kingship with Islamic legitimacy, so that his Rum Seljuq dedicatee could situate his future political actions within the framework of an explicitly Seljuq style of rulership. The citations from Persian *maṭnawā*, especially the *Šāhnāme*, related their Turkish sultanate to the esteemed history of the Iranian kings. But the Abbasid recognition of the first Great Seljuq sultan Ṭuḡril Beg, which Rāwandī recounted twice, in the autobiographical statement and the institutional history, granted their Ḥanafite sultanate the blessing of the Sunnite caliphate.¹²⁴ The *Rāḥat*, however, is also written evidence for the continued importance of oral practices, especially the recitation of poetry and the uttering of invocations within the context of Seljuq court ceremonies.¹²⁵ This oral dimension is expressed, on the one hand, in the organization of its introduction and conclusion in accordance with the model of Persian panegyric *qaṣʿīdas* and, on the other hand, in the roles of poetry and invocations in the institutional history of the Great Seljuq sultanate.

Rāwandī opened and concluded the *Rāḥat* with verses, beginning with the praise of God and ending with an invocation on behalf of his dedicatee.¹²⁶ Although the

124. See above, chapter III, notes 196 and 255.

125. For the difficulties accompanying the written representation of an oral practice, see the transformation of oral legal customs into written legal norms in Gerhard Dilcher in Keller, *Pragmatische Schriftlichkeit*: “Auch die orale Rechtsordnung hat natürlich bindende Regeln für alle Beteiligten, also ‘objektives Recht’. Aber sie sind auch in den Königsdiplomen nicht darstellbar als verschriftlichte Normen, sondern nur ‘beschreibbar’ als *consuetudinarium ius* – aber dies sogar *omnium negotiatorum* – und abzusichern über das Marktgericht, in dem dinggenossenschaftlich die mündliche Feststellung als Recht, d.h. als ‘Herstellung’ von Urteil und Weistum erfolgt.” (15).

126. While Browne stated only that the opening doxology of the *Rāḥat* was composed in the style of a *maṭnawī*, Meisami observed that historiography was usually not introduced with verses, and thus counted the opening as further evidence for Rāwandī’s interest in a non-historical, rhetorical style; see: Browne, “Account”: 569; and Meisami, *Persian Historiography*: 239–240; compare the debate on Rāwandī’s style in chapter II, notes 213–214.

coexistence of verses, be they distichs or single lines, and prose is a regularly observed stylistic characteristic of both literary Arabic and literary Persian, their interaction is not yet fully understood.¹²⁷ Still, Rāwandī's use of verses at these prominent places in the text seems to signal that he utilized a poetic model to frame the three parts of his miscellany. The sequence of eulogy (*ḥamdala*), panegyric (*madḥ*), personal statement (*ḥasb-i ḥāl*), and invocation (*du'ā'*) was first described as the model of Persian panegyric *qaṣ̣īdas* that originated in post-Mongol Iran.¹²⁸ While none of these four components originated in Persian literature,¹²⁹ their combination within the Persian *qaṣ̣īda* and the autobiographical potential of the *ḥasb-i ḥāl*, which allowed the author to present his case to his honoree (*mamdūh*), corresponds to the ceremonies of Islamic courts that adopted Persian as their official language.

127. For a consideration of the current state of research, see the articles by Wolfhart Heinrichs and Julie Scott Meisami in Harris and Reichl, *Prosimetrum*: 249–275 (medieval Arabic) and 295–319 (medieval Persian).

128. Glünz, "Poetic Traditions."

129. See above, chapter III, note 6.

Table 19. The *Rāḥat*'s introduction and conclusion
vis-à-vis the sections of a Persian panegyric *qaṣīda*

I	<i>ḥamdala</i> = opening with <i>maṭnawī</i> -excerpt in the <i>Shāhnāme</i> -meter	= p.1
II	<i>madḥ</i> 1: Muḥammad	= p.5
	<i>madḥ</i> 2: <i>ṣaḥāba</i> and <i>tābiʿīn</i> as well as Abū Ḥanīfa and al-Šāfiʿī	= p.8
	<i>madḥ</i> 3: Kai Ḥusrau	= p.18
III	<i>ḥasb-i ḥāl</i> 1: “ <i>ḍikr-i aḥwāl-i muṣannif-i kitāb</i> ”	= p.38
	<i>ḥasb-i ḥāl</i> 2: “ <i>sabab-i tālīf-i īn kitāb</i> ”	= p.57
	Justice (ʿadl u-sitāyiš-i insāf)	= p.68
	Sultanate of the Great Seljuqs (<i>tārīḥ-hā u-šīʿr-hā</i>)	= p.85
	Skills expected of rulers (<i>faṣl-hā-yi mušbiʿ</i>)	= p.405
	<i>ḥasb-i ḥāl</i> 3: “ <i>ḍikr-i ḥwāb</i> ”	= p.459
IV	<i>duʿāʾ</i> = <i>qaṣīda</i> for Kai Ḥusrau	= p.464-467

The poetic model provided Rāwandī with a framing device that structured the introduction and conclusion and linked them together, whereas its *ḥasb-i ḥāl* offered him the opportunity to locate his own life, as well as that of his dedicatee Kai Ḥusrau, within the context of Seljuq history. The length and complexity of Rāwandī's *ḥasb-i ḥāl* illustrate how effectively he underlined his plea for patronage through placing the three parts of his miscellany within a frame that corresponds to the model of the panegyric *qaṣīda*: The Rum Seljuq sultan is both dedicatee of the miscellany and *mamdūḥ* of the panegyric.

As mentioned above, Rāwandī announced in the survey of contents the principles according to which he employed poetry and invocations in the institutional history: Each of the chapters about the fourteen Great Seljuq sultans would end with an invocation on behalf of his Rum Seljuq dedicatee followed by a panegyric, while twelfth-century poetry

related to the Great Seljuq sultans would be adduced whenever available. The institutional history contains, on the one hand, poetry that enjoyed the status of historical evidence because it commemorated a person of times past and, on the other hand, invocations and poetry that were conceived to effect the future. But why did Rāwandī deem both suitable for the institutional history? He imposed an easily discernible order onto the institutional history by employing the invocations and panegyrics to separate the chapters about the individual sultans from each other.¹³⁰ The regularly repeated praise for the *Rāḥat*'s dedicatee recalls expressions of humility and gratitude, the use of which was regulated by a court's protocol. The prominence granted to Kai Ḥusrau in these reports about the rule of men from another region and an extinct branch of the family corresponded to the sultan's central position at his own court in Konya. Moreover, neither poems about historical events nor panegyric poetry and blessings were a means of private self-reflection; they were composed for a specific addressee.¹³¹ In medieval Islamic societies, where access to books was restricted by more than a limited access to the acquisition of reading and writing skills, poems were perceived as texts to be recited before an audience, even if later they were incorporated into the canon of written literature. With regard to political poems, the distinction between events of the past and wishes for the future is not necessarily very definite. In post-Saddam Iraq, on 11 May 2004, clerics, clan leaders, business men, military and police officers marked the

130. For Rāwandī's use of invocations in the autobiographical statement, see above, chapter III, note 122.

131. For general observations about the insertion of poetry into Persian historiography, see: Meisami, *Persian Historiography*: 291–292. Meisami, however, did not discuss the temporal framework of such insertions.

withdrawal of the US Marines from Falluja with a celebration that included the recitation of poetry about the not yet achieved unity between Iraq's Sunnites and Shi'ites.¹³² Public recitation of poetry is also employed in the service of politics in the western world. In the US, the most noted occasions for the intersection of politics and poetry are presidential inauguration ceremonies. That a very frail Robert Frost (1874–1963) participated in the inauguration of John F. Kennedy (1917–1963) to recite poetry dedicated to the thirty-fifth president is still considered a significant moment of the Kennedy administration.¹³³

Similarly, Rāwandī did not include poems and invocations in the institutional history of the Great Seljuq sultanate to entertain and divert his Rum Seljuq dedicatee with a well-balanced mix of verses and prose. On the contrary. The selected poems and invocations transported oral practices into a written text, and signaled its author's mastery of the rules of the Rum Seljuq court protocol. Since Rāwandī himself did not travel to Anatolia to plead in person for the patronage of Kai Ḥusrau, he designed the *Rāḥat* as his representative. The miscellany is a written record of Great Seljuq politics, organized in accordance with oral practices that were indispensable to a Rum Seljuq identity. The *Rāḥat* therefore illustrates how writing can be employed to adhere to oral practices, even though they were changed by being represented in writing.

132. Rosen, "Home Rule": "The dignitaries sat in white plastic chairs under a big tent that shaded them from the midday sun, clapping politely and drinking from cans of soda and bottles of water, while poets read work they had prepared for the occasion. Several from the poets were from other cities in Iraq, including Najaf, and a recurrent theme that afternoon was the bond between Sunnis and Shiites." (48).

133. For the text of "For John F. Kennedy His Inauguration: Gift outright of 'The Gift Outright' (With some preliminary history in rhyme)," see: Frost, *Poetry*: 422–425.

IV. f. Means for the transmission of knowledge

Textbooks are evidence for the pursuit of knowledge in the societies in which they first originated and later circulated. The juxtaposition of the *Muḥāḍarāt* and the *Rāḥat* reveals that both authors had to address the didactic question of how their written textbooks accommodated existing concepts of the oral transmission of knowledge and of the oral performance of socially binding acts. In both compilations the spoken and the written word are played off against each other, but the respective solutions differ because contents and audiences differ, despite both authors being linked to west-Iranian cities before the Mongol conquest. The *Muḥāḍarāt* suggests that in the eleventh century there was enough demand among the general audience to stimulate the compilation of affordable textbooks of literary Arabic. The *Rāḥat* illustrates that in the twelfth century Persian was a well-established administrative language of Islamic courts. While the ruling Turkish dynasties were surely cognizant of Arabic and its prestige among Arab and non-Arab Muslims alike, no Turkic language was yet available as a full-fledged literary medium. The deeply entrenched linguistic divisions in Middle-Eastern studies do not favor the exploration of premodern Arabic and Persian literatures irrespective of their contribution to an essentially Arab-Islamic or Persian-Islamic civilization. Furthermore, these linguistic divisions appear as obvious, almost natural, since the contents and circulation of works, such as the *Muḥāḍarāt* and the *Rāḥat*, seem to justify them. Rāḡib's popular anthology focuses on how men interact with their peers and thus nicely supports the setting commonly assumed as the background of medieval Arabic literature: an egalitarian society that thrives in cities where educated men freely hobnobbed at public

and private spaces, such as markets, mosques, schools, and private parties. Rāwandī's unique miscellany concentrates on a Turkish dynasty, and is suffused with panegyrics so that it offers an equally strong argument for the generally envisioned social context of medieval Persian literature: a hierarchical society in which the elites lived royally at their courts, and sponsored the arts and sciences in a grand way. That the *Muḥāḍarāt* and the *Rāḥat* originated nevertheless within the same geographical and political context, and in close temporal proximity, is then an indispensable reminder that in the eleventh and twelfth centuries western Iran was a factionalized society with a diverse population. Consequently, the shared context of origin indicates that the linguistic divisions in Middle-Eastern studies follow from the application of the nineteenth-century concept of nationalism—one people, one language, one territory, one history—to medieval Islamic societies.

The back-to-back analysis shows that the Arabic anthology and the Persian miscellany share, despite their differences in language, contents, and intended audience, characteristics that follow from their composition as textbooks. Both compilations are single-subject encyclopedias, although the *Muḥāḍarāt* is prescriptive, and the *Rāḥat* descriptive, since a potential patron might be advised but not corrected. Neither textbook provides instructions for how to use it for teaching Arabic or studying the Great Seljuq sultanate. In both compilations the contents are presented from an anthropocentric and gendered viewpoint. Whether the behavior of peers or the interaction between sultan and subjects, both textbooks focus on how men interact with other men: Rāḡib and Rāwandī were men in a medieval patriarchal society, writing textbooks for other men. The

multitudes of excerpts convey so many details that the almost complete silence about women is barely audible. Still, the anthropocentric orientation is underlined by the distinctly circumscribed roles that the authors granted theology. Koran and *ḥadīṭ* are incontestable sources of authority, and hence regularly quoted in both textbooks, and yet Rāḡib's chapters on issues of faith and mortality¹³⁴ and Rāwandī's Ḥanafite partisanship concentrate on the individual and societal consequences of dogmatic beliefs.

The *Muḥāḍarāt* and the *Rāḡat* are witnesses to the societal dependence on literacy, even though their contents and structure document at the same time the prestige and use of oral practices in this literate society. The oral transmission of knowledge had lost its monopoly, yet writing was not heralded as its replacement and instead widely employed in its support. The references to oral practices have a different status in the two compilations. Rāḡib's perfunctory allusions to debates among equals are already employed as topoi that preserve the memory of the earlier predominance of the spoken word in this written anthology, whereas Rāwandī employed invocations to structure the text of his miscellany. A canonized literary tradition is difficult to discard, and hence the Arabic anthology could stay in circulation,¹³⁵ whereas the Persian miscellany, written for one specific reader, never moved to audiences beyond the ruling elites who wondered whether the Great Seljuqs could strengthen the legitimacy of their rule in Iran or Asia

134. Rāḡib, *Muḥāḍarāt*, ed. Beirut, 4: 383–397 (censure of this world), 398–482 (denominations and observances), and 483–535 (death).

135. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*: “All the great classical communities conceived of themselves as cosmically central, through the medium of a sacred language linked to a superterrestrial order of Power. Accordingly, the stretch of written Latin, Pali, Arabic, or Chinese was, in theory, unlimited. (In fact, the deader the written language – the farther it was from speech – the better: in principle, everyone has access to a pure world language of signs.)” (13).

Minor. The *Rāḥat* further demonstrates that distance and separation favor literacy inasmuch as oral communication is less efficient across long distances. Rāwandī had to compose his miscellany if he wanted to petition Kai Ḥusrau because the Rum Seljuq court was in Konya, and he was living in Hamadan.

How readers worked with either textbook to improve their grasp of literary Arabic and to inform themselves about Great Seljuq politics and life style can only be guessed, since neither author explicitly discussed which field of knowledge and which methodology were the focus of his compilation. In the *Muḥāḍarāt*, Rāḡib comprised the literary representation of the first three centuries of Islamic history, ordering his material according to the canon of literary Arabic in verse and prose. In the *Rāḥat*, Rāwandī constructed the narrative of a Seljuq identity to impress on his dedicatee the ethical obligation to intervene in western Iran.¹³⁶ Future research on Islamic manuscripts, Arabic language teaching, and Seljuq historiography is very likely to elucidate the coordination between pedagogy and the transmission of knowledge, though the already gleaned data allow for some preliminary considerations. Until the end of the sixteenth century, only the institutional history of the *Rāḥat* was rewritten and excerpted by Ilkhanid, Ottoman, and Safavid administrators for insertion into their new chronicles of the ruling dynasties.

136. Renate Lachmann in Haverkamp and Lachmann, *Memoria*: “Unter den sich ablösenden, konkurrierenden und interagierenden Paradigmen, die auf immer andere Weise an der mnemonischen Konstruktion der Kultur beteiligt sind, sind insbesondere die hervorzuheben und nach ihrem systematischen Ort innerhalb der Kulturmodelle zu befragen, die eigene Techniken, Disziplinen und konsistente Konzepte hervorgebracht haben. Zu den Paradigmen dieser Art zählen das mnemotechnische, das diagrammatische, das diegetische, und das poetische. ... Die vier Paradigmen haben einen unterschiedlichen Fokus. Sie sind entweder Techniken oder Künste, sie sind entweder mythisch oder wissenschaftlich, konzeptuell oder pragmatisch ausgerichtet. Geht es in dem einen um die Kunst des Merkens, die der perfekten Produktion der Rede gilt, so geht es in dem anderen um die Repräsentation des gesamten Weltwissens oder um die erzählende Reproduktion der Vergangenheit oder um das Aus-Sprechen eines in der Sprache immer schon verborgenen Ur-Wissens.” (XX).

This specialized interest in the most extensive part of Rāwandī's miscellany was so limited that it did not spurn any detectable interest in producing additional manuscript copies of the miscellany. That the *Rāḥat* lacked mass-market appeal helps us to appreciate the popularity of the *Muḥāḍarāt*. The circulation of the Arabic anthology provides impressive evidence that Rāḡib succeeded at compiling a practical textbook that for centuries continued to offer its readers a convenient gateway to the canon of literary Arabic. Conversely, the failure of its seventeenth-century Persian translation becomes understandable. In Safavid Iran, the pride in the achievements of literary Persian justified the efforts to replace the Arabic canon with a Persian canon, even though a literal translation of the Arabic excerpts could not convert an anthology of literary Arabic into an anthology of literary Persian. The uninterrupted circulation of the Arabic original, however, does not prove that the reasons for buying and studying the anthology did not change over time. The strength of a literary canon is found in its capacity to sustain the various interpretations that different generations ascribe to the very same texts.¹³⁷ The *Muḥāḍarāt* editions that appeared in Egypt after 1870, during the rise of Arab nationalism, document an antiquarian interest in the eleventh-century anthology of literary Arabic. In the twentieth century, when Middle-Eastern societies were undergoing dramatic political and socioeconomic changes, the *Muḥāḍarāt* has remained in print in

137. Assmann, *Gedächtnis*: "Jeder selegierende Zugriff auf Tradition, d.h. jeder Rezeptionsakt, ist zugleich ein Bekenntnis zu einer spezifischen Wertordnung. Rezeption und Wertsetzung bedingen sich gegenseitig. Der Begriff Kanon bezieht sich daher mit einem gewissen Recht auf beides zugleich. Dain liegt seine terminologische Fruchtbarkeit. Er läßt in der Beziehung auf ein unantastbares Korpus heiliger Texte zugleich dessen lebensformende, maßgebende, orientierende Kraft anklingen und verweist in der Beziehung auf Maßstäbe und Wertverpflichtungen künstlerischer Produktion zugleich auf die *Werke*, die solche *Werte* exemplarisch verkörpern." (120).

Egypt, Lebanon, and Iran, and is today available throughout the Middle East. But the fact that a book is easy and cheap to obtain does not guarantee that it will actually be read. Books are purchased for many purposes, and many people own and keep books they have neither read nor plan to read. Moreover, the transformation of books from texts to be read into objects to be owned is a phenomenon that occurred in literate societies before the invention of the printing press. In Islamic societies, Koran manuscripts that were beyond repair were recycled into apotropaic objects because the Koran is the word of God, and scribes copied miniature Korans to be worn as talismans.¹³⁸ After the introduction of commercial printing in Egypt, owning a copy of an anthology of literary Arabic could substitute for having the active language skills. The prestige derived from the active mastery of literary Arabic could also be gained from the object that contained the literary tradition between its covers.

138. For the observation that the custom of wearing miniature Korans as talismans was particularly popular among Turks, see: Lane, *Account*: 247 and 568.

V **Conclusion: Education, society, and history**

denn nicht, daß man in einer besonderen Provinz zu Hause ist, sondern daß man diese Provinz für die einzige hält und mit der Welt verwechselt, macht einen zum Provinzler

Wolfgang Iser, *Grenzgänge der Ästhetik*

Communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined.

Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*

I began this study with the observation that compilations of non-fictional texts written for educational purposes are an intellectual phenomenon specific to literate societies. The intellectual phenomenon comprises, on the one hand, the episteme according to which these textbooks were compiled and, on the other hand, the cooperation between written and oral practices that determine the actual mechanics of transmitting knowledge through written texts. But learning, even if it is the solitary study of a book in an abandoned library, is always a social activity. All of us need to learn how the society in which we live functions, and societies in turn try to exert control over that which is taught to the next generation. A comprehensive interpretation of textbooks must therefore include an exploration of the socioeconomic context of education.

Nineteenth- and twentieth-century scholars valued the *Muḥāḍarāt* and the *Rāḥat* as important sources of medieval Arabic literature and Great Seljuq politics, respectively. They treated the compilations as depositories of information, mining them for previously unknown gems of Arabic belles-lettres and functional data of the Great Seljuq sultanate. I decided to foreground instead the pragmatic uses of these compilations by approaching them as textbooks. From this perspective, it could be recognized that their contents concern less-researched intellectual preoccupations in pre-Mongol Iran, since neither

textbook belonged to the prestigious curricula of advanced instruction in jurisprudence, theology, philosophy, or in the practical training in the crafts and sciences.

The circulation and reception of the *Muḥāḍarāt* and the *Rāḥat* reveal the interdependency between the subject of the compilations and the social status of their intended audiences. Rāḡib's anthology is a propaedeutic work for a general audience. The Koran, as well as the poetic heritage of pre-Islamic Arabia (*ǧāhilīya*) and the poetry and prose that originated during the first phase of Abbasid caliphate, was, and still is, considered the most beautiful work of Arabic literature. Conversely, the appreciation for the language of the Koran and for the accompanying literary canon is a central goal of a basic Islamic education.¹ In contrast, Rāwandī's miscellany is a unique selection of texts designed as a personalized curriculum introducing a Rum Seljuq sultan to Great Seljuq politics and courtly etiquette.² The different social status of their intended audiences is remarkable, because both Rāḡib and Rāwandī apparently compiled these textbooks on their own initiative. That neither work had been commissioned indicates that, at least in the larger cities, the demand for textbooks, aside from the needs for instruction and tutoring services, was sufficient to sustain "literary workmen"³ who survived without patronage. To what degree the employment opportunities for a learned *Lumpenproletariat* in the larger west-Iranian cities, such as Isfahan and Hamadan,

1. Makdisi, *Rise of Humanism*: "The *waqf* institutions were those where humanistic studies of *adab* were pursued especially as propaedeutic to the religious sciences." (60); compare 48–54.

2. Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: "i'tabir bi-man maḍā qabla-kā wa-lā takun 'ibratan li-man yakūnu ḡalfa-kā" *Learn a lesson from everyone who exercised power before you, but do not be a lesson in bad behavior for everyone who lives after you.* (67).

3. Burke, *Social History*: 166.

depended on the presence of courts maintained by the ruling elites is impossible to gauge. But the *Rāḥat* documents that an otherwise undistinguished and obscure man of letters could actively seek out a sultan's patronage.

Both textbooks reached their intended audiences, and their circulation was not terminated by the Mongol conquest. Their distinct histories of reception reflected their different audiences. An anthology of literary Arabic could be of use to every literate Muslim aspiring to improve his grasp of the language of the Koran, whereas a miscellany about the Great Seljuq sultanate was designed as political background reading for rulers and their entourage. The historical section of the *Rāḥat* became obsolete reading matter in the sixteenth century, when Ottoman and Safavid historians completed new authoritative accounts about the contribution of the Great Seljuq sultanate to the rise of the Ottoman and Safavid empires.

The *Muḥāḍarāt* and the *Rāḥat* are single-subject encyclopedias. They were designed as specialized textbooks for non-specialist readers. The *Muḥāḍarāt*'s reader was neither linguist nor literary critic, and the Rum Seljuq dedicatee Kai Ḥusrrau was neither political scientist nor administrator. Rāḡib and Rāwandī selected topics (*res*) and disciplines (*artes*) to cover comprehensively the canon of literary Arabic and the Great Seljuq sultanate, respectively, yet on the macro-level the sequence of parts, chapters, and sections follows in both compilations a principle of associative order of topics as well as of disciplines. Unfortunately, at the current state of research on textbooks in medieval Islamic societies it is impossible to determine more precisely how the principle of

associative order was employed to organize the contents of either compilation.⁴ On the one hand, we have no comparative studies of specialized and general textbooks for any Islamic curricula. On the other hand, we have no analysis of how in medieval Islamic societies the organization of textbooks is related to the organization of school curricula and libraries.⁵

The contents of the *Muḥāḍarāt* and the *Rāḥat* demonstrated the range of subjects taught with the support of written texts, as well as the influence of oral practices on the structure of these written textbooks. The complex relationship between the pragmatic uses of literacy and the well-established conventions of oral practices challenges our contemporary perception of a strict separation between the oral and the written transmission of knowledge. Moreover, the reception of these compilations vis-à-vis the preservation of their authors' biographies attested that, at the current state of research on Islamic manuscripts, it is impossible to determine whether Rāḡib and Rāwandī compiled their compilations under the assumption that readers and copyists would respect both the fixity of their texts and their authorship. The esteem for the anthology of literary Arabic, as well as for other works ascribed to Rāḡib, led to the creation of his biography, expressing the need of later generations to identify more precisely Rāḡib's position within the acknowledged networks of Sunnite and Shi'ite scholars. In contrast, the highly

4. The contents of compilations can be, for example, organized according to commonplaces; see: Burke, *Social History*: 95 and 181.

5. For the current state of research on book manufacture and libraries in Islamic societies, see: Gacek, *Arabic Manuscript Tradition*: 190–192. For an analysis of how in early twentieth-century Yemen the organization of legal education was reflected in textbooks, school curricula, and libraries, see: Messick, *Calligraphic State*.

selective reception of the *Rāḥat* did not generate interest in its author's biography. Only Rāwandī's institutional history of the Great Seljuq sultanate was repeatedly revised and translated, but, despite his detailed autobiographical statement, Rāwandī himself was never acknowledged as its author.

The circulation of the *Muḥāḍarāt* and the *Rāḥat* illustrated the opposite cases of a popular anthology and a unique miscellany. Nonetheless, both textbooks provided insight into the circulation and selection of canonical knowledge. Rāḡib compiled his anthology as an authoritative survey of literary Arabic in verse and prose. Islamic societies varied greatly within the *umma*, and the educational opportunities in Buyid Isfahan cannot be assumed to have been identical with those provided at a Seljuk court in Hamadan or Konya, or at the Azhar in Mamluk Cairo. But the *Muḥāḍarāt* retained its value, even though the concrete methods and goals of teaching this literary tradition are likely to have changed over the centuries, since Muslims still consider the knowledge of the original language of the Koran a requisite of an Islamic education. In contrast, Rāwandī's account of the Great Seljuq sultanate became by default the authoritative source of all later versions of Great Seljuq historiography because today the unique *Rāḥat* manuscript is the oldest preserved witness of Nīšāpūrī's Seljuq chronicle. That later historians drew on Rāwandī's institutional history of the Great Seljuq sultanate without acknowledging either Rāwandī, or his reliance on Nīšāpūrī, seems to indicate that functional data were not considered an author's intellectual property.

The rich *ḥadīth* literature demonstrates that the knowledge of historical events, especially events in the life of the prophet Muḥammad and his companions, was part of

an Islamic curriculum. Yet historical events did not constitute a field of knowledge that was the subject of a specific discipline (*ars*) practiced by trained historians.⁶ Historical events were instead considered data (*tawārīḥ* and *ta' rīḥ-hā*) that could be employed as *exempla* to develop and support arguments in every field of knowledge.⁷ Such a typological use of historical examples presupposes a cyclical concept of history, and Islamic concepts of history are eschatological, combining linear with cyclical concepts.⁸ Events of human history are always perceived within the framework of a linear divine history of salvation, an Islamic *historia sacra*, that began with God's creation of the world and that will end with the Day of Judgment. The divine history reached its fulfillment (*sub gratia*) in the foundation of the *umma*, and the next significant event of

6. For the ensuing problem of finding no full-time historians in medieval Islamic societies, see: Rosenthal, *History*: 54–65; and Meisami, *Persian Histography*: 289–290. For the modern western concept of history, compare: Koselleck, *Vergangene Zukunft*: “Die eigentümlich Bedeutung von Geschichte, zugleich das Wissen ihrer selbst zu meinen, läßt sich einmal als generelle Formel für einen anthropologisch vorgegebenen Zirkel verstehen, der geschichtliche Erfahrung und ihre Erkenntnis aufeinander verweist. Zum anderen aber ist die Konvergenz der beiden Bedeutungen ein historisch einmaliger Vorgang, der selber erst im 18. Jahrhundert stattgefunden hat. ... Mit dem Begriff ›Geschichte schlechthin‹ wird die Geschichtsphilosophie freigesetzt, innerhalb derer die transzendente Bedeutung von Geschichte als Bewußtseinsraum und von Geschichte als Handlungsraum kontaminiert werden.” (130).

7. Muslim historians established a fixed era so that *ta' rīḥ*, based on the date of the *hiġra*, is the technical term for the measuring of time and provides the chronological matrix of Islamic historiography, see: Rosenthal, *History*: 74; Bosworth, “The Persian Contribution”: 223; and Perry, Review of *The Persian Presence*: 454. For a reversal of the relationship between the knowledge of historical events and the knowledge of the world, following from the projection of the modern western concept of history on the medieval Islamic episteme, compare: Jan Geert van Gelder in Binkley, *Pre-Modern Encyclopaedic Texts*: “It is important, I believe, that this combination of encyclopaedic knowledge and history turned out to be more popular as a genre than other forms of encyclopaedism, such as the more or less systematic encyclopaedia without history of the Sincere Brethren. Knowledge of the world is a preliminary for historical knowledge. For the Sincere Brethren, who wrote for pious believers with leanings toward philosophy, the knowledge of history was obviously not relevant.” (258). For the premodern western concept of *historia* as a source of *exempla*, compare: Hans-Werner Goetz in Schmale, *Funktion und Formen*: “Die Frage nach dem Standort der *historia* im System der *artes liberales* war offenbar falsch gestellt. Man wird vielmehr erklären müssen, weshalb verschiedene ‘Künste’ sich mit der *historia* beschäftigten.” (174).

8. In Shi'ite Islam the coming of the *mahdī* provides a second chance of salvation that is absent from Sunnite Islam.

divine history will be the Day of Judgment. The intermittent stage of quiet is filled with human activity maintaining the divine status quo of the *umma*. Since the events of human history *sub gratia* cannot alter the course of divine history, the events of human history represent transfigurations of the revealed divine history and can be interpreted within the paradigm of the most important intersection between divine and human history: How the prophet Muḥammad acted on the revelation of the word of God.⁹

Neither the *Muḥāḍarāt* nor the *Rāḥat* focused on history, though both contain information about and references to historical events. Rāwandī surveyed recent and contemporary politics in the institutional history of the Great Seljuq sultanate,¹⁰ providing data to compel his Rum Seljuq dedicatee Kai Ḥusrau to conquer western Iran.¹¹ Rāwandī's reporting of Great Seljuq politics recalls Bob Woodward's book about the preemptive war against Iraq and the toppling of Saddam Hussein's dictatorship. Woodward's book has been promoted as a collection of facts about the internal decision-making processes of the Bush administration, even though Woodward neither revealed his sources nor identified his criteria of reported speech and direct quotations. In a review in the *New Yorker*, Hendrik Hertzberg argued that Woodward's claim to factual correctness was actually strengthened by his anti-analytical approach because it kept the

9. For a thesis about recurrent patterns in Islamic historiography, derived from the combination of cyclical cosmic time and linear human time, compare: Meisami, *Persian Historiography*: 283–286.

10. For *ḥabar* and *tawārīḥ* as part of curricula, see: Rāwandī, *Rāḥat*: 13 lines 13–15 (*tawārīḥ*), and 65 lines 7–8 (*ḥabar*).

11. Rosenthal, *History*: “The problem of historical truth was, it would seem, uppermost in the mind of quite a few historians.” (60); compare: Meisami, *Persian Historiography*: “The pre-modern historian's primary concern is not with facts, but with the meaning of those facts;” (12).

presented data open to interpretation.¹² While Rāwandī appears like an early-thirteenth-century practitioner of the US brand of political journalism, Rāḡib stayed out of the political fray altogether. The *Muḥāḍarāt* is strictly non-partisan in its outlook, and free of verifiable functional data. Rāḡib designed an inoffensive textbook of literary Arabic so that the neutral anthology could reach the widest possible circulation

Our academic ethics postulates that scientific research is conducted in an atmosphere of unbiased, objective curiosity about the things themselves.¹³ Insofar as an ahistorical description of a past and foreign society can be very convincing as an essentially true image in its timeless stillness, it does not become evident that the perception of both continuity¹⁴ and change¹⁵ poses an epistemological challenge. Heuristic decisions must be employed to define the perspective from which change and continuity is observed. These heuristic decisions presuppose a specific understanding of the relationship between history and time,¹⁶ and concern, on the one hand, the differences

12. Hertzberg, "In the Soup": 98–100. Hertzberg's positive evaluation follows from the implicit assumption that a non-analytical presentation of raw intelligence is less interpreted and hence more truthful because showing is less invasive and hence more objective than telling.

13. Welsch, *Grenzgänge*: "die Leitinstanz der Moderne, die Wissenschaft" (45).

14. Rosaldo, "From the Door of His Tent": "Yet this very sense of long-term continuity tempts the historian into committing his discipline's cardinal sin: anachronism." (83).

15. Foucault, *Archaeology*: "And the great problem presented by such historical analyses is not how continuities are established, how a single pattern is formed and preserved, how for so many different, successive minds there is a single horizon, ... What one is seeing, then, is the emergence of a whole field of questions, some of which are already familiar, by which this new form of history is trying to develop its own theory: how is one to specify the different concepts that enable us to conceive of discontinuity (threshold, rapture, break, mutation, transformation)?" (5).

16. Time and history are themselves historical concepts, the understanding of which changes over time; see: Koselleck, *Vergangene Zukunft*: 130–143. Moreover, the historicizing of the concept of time is necessary for establishing in retrospect watersheds and turning points that have caused the discontinuation of traditions and customs; see: Lynn Hunt in Medick and Trepp, *Geschlechtergeschichte und Allgemeine*

between stability, order, and stagnation and, on the other hand, the characteristics of evolution, progress, development, and anarchy. The followers of an orthodox religious movement, for example, are likely to understand their exclusive focus on a small canon of prayer books as a sign of stability and vitality of their faith. But for non-believers, limiting reading matter to a handful of strictly religious anthologies could appear as a symptom of stagnation, signaling the rejection of progress and development, even though the very same people might nevertheless consider the continued reliance on Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria* for the instruction in Latin and rhetoric a sign of the vitality of the classical tradition within the western civilization. The conservative reception of the *Muḥāḍarāt* and the selective reception of the *Rāḥat* prove neither an unchanged teaching practice nor an unchanged mind-set. Technical literature about pedagogy and didactics illustrates that different generations can use the same textbook for many purposes and in various ways. In western Europe, the canon of Latin authors stayed more or less the same between the tenth and the twentieth centuries, yet its role within the educational curriculum changed over time. Moreover, the synchronic analysis of a society will always reveal the parallel existence of indications of both change and continuity since societal processes never affect all members of a society to the same degree.

My initial decision to compare an Arabic anthology with a Persian miscellany led to the premise that in the eleventh and twelfth centuries Iran was a diverse society. The continued circulation of the *Muḥāḍarāt* and the *Rāḥat* outside western Iran after the Mongol conquest provided evidence against taking these textbooks from pre-Mongol Iran

as the direct expression of an Arab, Iranian, or Turkish identity.¹⁷ The most unexpected result of my analysis is therefore the extent to which the Ottoman Ḥanafite and the Safavid Shiʿite perception of the Arab-Islamic heritage and an Islamic identity are still reflected in our contemporary research on Arabic and Persian literatures. This reflection is not surprising, inasmuch as European scholars traveled widely in the Middle East since the seventeenth century, studied Arabic, Ottoman, or Persian with Arab, Turkish, or Iranian scholars, and purchased manuscripts from booksellers in Istanbul, Cairo, or Isfahan. But it is surprising that, despite the impact of Edward Said's *Orientalism* on the self-image of contemporary Middle-Eastern studies, especially in North America, the lasting influence of the various Ottoman and Safavid informants on contemporary western scholarship remains to be acknowledged and systematically analyzed. In the twentieth century, Brockelmann, Rowson, and Thomas presented the well-established Ottoman Ḥanafite interpretation of Rāḡib's biography as the only game in town. From this Arab-Islamic Sunni perspective, the Shiʿite and Imamite appropriations of Rāḡib and his oeuvre as Iranian heritage remain invisible. In contrast, the evaluation of Rāwandī's institutional history of the Great Seljuq sultanate is determined by patently

17. For the methodological problem of defining the concepts of collective, cultural, and national memory, see: Winter, "Film": "one feature of the discussion of 'collective memory' that is at the heart of the problem. The assumption is that individual memory and collective memory are related in a linear or aggregative way. I know of no study in neurology or cognitive psychology that justifies such a conclusion. The language of 'collective memory' or 'cultural memory' is simply too vague to bear weight of such an argument." (860); and "one crucial analytical distinction that these authors do not make. 'Collective memory' is not the same as national memory. National collectives never create a unitary, undifferentiated, and enduring narrative called 'collective memory.' Nations do not remember, groups of people do. Their work is never singular, and it is never fixed." (864); compare: Confino, "Collective Memory": "That a given memory exists, that it has a symbolic representation and a political significance is obvious, but in itself it explains little if we do not place this memory within a global network of social transmission and symbolic representations." (1402).

nationalist sentiments. The twentieth-century Turkish scholars İbrahim Kafesoğlu (1914–1984) and Osman Turan (1914–1978) accepted the genealogical ties between the Oghuz, the Great Seljuqs, and the Rum Seljuqs as fact.¹⁸ They read Rāwandī's account of Great Seljuq politics as an important chronicle of successful Turkish Ḥanafite rule, because his yearning for the reconstitution of Great Seljuq rule over western Iran could be interpreted as the foreshadowing of the spread of a benevolent Ottoman rule over Asia Minor and the Balkans.¹⁹ From an Iranian perspective, however, the Great Seljuqs and the Khwarazm Shahs could seem as problematic rulers, since neither dynasty can be claimed as Iranian or Shi'ite.²⁰ While the Khwarazm Shahs's defeat of the Great Seljuqs could be explained as another instance of how successive waves of foreign invaders fought over the control of Iran, Rāwandī's account of west-Iranian history during the Great Seljuq sultanate could be utilized as evidence for the vicissitudes of non-Iranian rule over Iran.²¹ Parallel analysis of the reception of the *Muḥāḍarāt* and the *Rāḥat* reveals the continued application of these mutually exclusionary strategies of fitting the textbooks into the Turkish and Iranian concepts of Arabic literature and Iranian history.

18. Bosworth, *New Islamic Dynasties*: 187–188 and 214.

19. See the controversy between İbrahim Kafesoğlu and Osman Turan about the interpretation of Seljuq history, as documented in Leiser, *History of the Seljuks*.

20. It is, of course, one of the major ironies of Iranian history that the ethnic origin of the Safavids is obscure; Bosworth, *New Islamic Dynasties*: 279–280.

21. Julie Scott Meisami is representative for this attitude; see her email response “nothing nice about the Saljuqs?” to the H-Mideast-Medieval list, 4 July 2004.

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Sir, do you read books *through*?

Samuel Johnson

This list contains only works that are quoted in the text. The references in footnotes and bibliography follow the conventions of the *Chicago Manual of Style*, 14th ed. In the footnotes, articles and monographs are always cited with the author's last name and short title. Reference works and dictionaries that are well-known in the field of Middle Eastern studies are cited with their common abbreviations. To curb length these standard works are not included in the bibliography. Yet, in this list, the titles of journals as well as of dictionaries and encyclopedias are never abbreviated to facilitate the double-checking of references. Since the analysis of the *Muḥāḍarāt* and the *Rāḥat* takes as its starting point the observation that the circulation of manuscripts and imprints provides insight into the uses of these textbooks, the bibliography is divided into four sections that correspond to this argument:

- i. Manuscripts
- ii. Imprints of the two textbooks, as well as of sources, excerpts, abridgments, and translations
- iii. Manuscript catalogues and all other sources of bibliographical information about manuscripts, imprints, and editions of the two textbooks
- iv. All other published texts

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